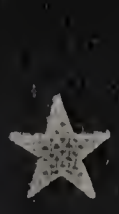

UNDER THE DESERT STARS

FRANK KOESTER

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UNDER
THE DESERT STARS

Eloping with his beloved one from the earth, to seek a haven of refuge on some other planet, they saw the earth and moon whiz past them, with an imposing comet in distance.

UNDER THE DESERT STARS

A Novel

BY

FRANK KOESTER

AUTHOR OF "THE PRICE OF INEFFICIENCY,"
ETC., ETC.

Illustrated by
L. C. VAN BENSCOTEN

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UNDER THE DESERT STARS

CHAPTER I

THE HYPNOTIC VICTIM

THE early spring sun was riding low in the heavens, going westward to seek its rest. The haze of twilight was creeping in upon the city from across the bay and the canyon-like streets of lower New York were already steeped in shadow.

Above the city rose the hum of industry and from the rivers the saucy whistles of tugboats, with their heavy laden barges, were telling those who would listen that they, too, were doing their bit.

But all this was lost to the girl standing at the promenade rail of the Queensborough Bridge, that massive structure spanning the East River, linking Brooklyn with New York. The girl, beautiful to an extreme, both in face and form, stood clutching the railing with a convulsive grip. Her eyes were set on something far in the distance and so far as the passersby were concerned, she was in another world.

Curious but hurried glances were aimed at her, but that was all. New Yorkers are always in a hurry and a passing glance satisfies the questions that arise in the minds of most of them.

Carl Lohman, however, was different. His profession had taught him to observe. So it was natural that he, noticing the strained attitude of the girl, should give more than a casual glance. Her handkerchief had fallen at her feet and he stooped down to restore it. His action elicited the slightest notice from her, so he ventured to remark: "I beg your pardon, Miss, but I believe this is yours."

At this, the girl slightly turned her head to see who had spoken to her. Carl noticed, then, the strange look in her eyes. The fixed stare in them seemed to be seeking something beyond the vision of mortal ken. What dream, what strange meditation had so rudely been broken into?

Mechanically she took one hand from the rail and accepted the dainty square of lace which Carl extended to her. A bow, so slight as to be scarcely perceptible was her only reply. This was but the outward show. Inwardly she felt relieved to some extent. A glance told her that this man, with his intellectual countenance and commanding presence, was no ordinary flirt. Then, without a word, she walked away.

Carl, believing that the handkerchief had been dropped with a purpose and curious to know more about the fascinating girl, hurried to her side and endeavored to start a conversation.

"Rather a warm day, is it not?"

No answer being given he continued: "Really tropical for this time of year."

Again no response. Carl realized that he had been mistaken. She had not intended to start a flirtation. He looked at her closely. Yes, that was it. She was nervous and trembling as from some all-powerful emotion. He would help her if he could.

"Madam, you are ill. May I be of some assistance?" and he extended his arm for support.

"Thank you, but I am all right," was the rather testy retort.

"You are a stranger here, are you not?"

The girl looked at him carefully, and hesitatingly inquired, "Why do you ask? Simply because I did not reply to your questions."

"No, not that," came from Carl; then, "Our American girls, or rather I should say, New York girls, resent being addressed by a stranger, even though he should offer aid when needed."

"Aid was not and is not now required. And to

answer your questions, I am a stranger here," came swiftly.

"So I thought," said he, flicking the ashes from his cigarette.

"What made you think so?" parried the other, looking at him cautiously from under her heavy lashes.

"Oh, because. Well, you see women of your type and eyes are strange here. I have lived here long enough to learn that."

"Strange?" she asked, with a forced smile and shrugging shoulders.

"Yes. Beautifully strange."

"Do you really think so?" She was beginning to feel at ease.

"Yes. And as for being a stranger, I would say you are a European and have not been in this country very long. At any rate the fads of the moment have had no effect upon your taste."

"Thank you," she returned with a smile.

"Just here on a visit, if I dare ask?"

Their eyes met. Each was trying to fathom the mind of the other. For a minute she was silent, then in a decisive tone of voice she replied, "You are right. I arrived here a week ago from abroad."

"From where—abroad?"

"That is asking questions." She was fencing for time.

"Oh, come on."

"What's that?" frowning.

"You misunderstand me. I mean tell me where you came from. England?"

"Do I look English?"

"No. Not at all." Admiring her gift of quick and thoughtful repartee, he supplemented, "No, you are neither English nor French."

"But England and France are not the only countries, although they like to think so when they do not require the help of other countries," she answered sarcastically.

Their walk had by this time brought them to the bridge terminal.

"Would you mind calling a taxi?" she asked.

"With pleasure," he replied, and called a passing car.

It was with a heart that sank at the answer, that he asked, at the parting, "May I see you again?"

A smile curved her exquisitely carven lips and seemed to brighten her face and lend added luster to her eyes as she slowly shook her head in the negative.

Carl stepped forward to help her into the taxi, but before he could realize it, she had gathered her

skirts, revealing a dainty pair of ankles and entered the machine. A moment later the door was closed and the car sped away, leaving Carl standing at the curb, watching it with charmed eyes.

Hat still in hand, and entirely oblivious of the curious eyes of those who had witnessed the incident, he pondered over her lithe and graceful form, the large fathomless eyes and the subtle charm of her musical voice. But his heart would have pulsed with added vigor had he heard, as the taxi started, her scarcely audible "Auf Wiedersehen."

A final look at the parting car gave him a pleasing view of her smiling face, as she gave him a gracious nod. He bowed and waved his hand in return, murmuring half aloud, "Some girl!"

Suddenly his musing was rudely broken into by the passing of a truck and the growled warning from its driver to get away from the curb. Brought thus back to the stern world of reality and the commonplace, he gave his cane a vicious twirl and muttered beneath his breath, "Damn it! That's what I call hard luck"—throwing away his cigarette.

Having given vent to this expletive, he turned and went his way, seeing nothing but that beautiful smiling face which was the center and pivot of his confused mind.

At the Claza, Sana, for that was the name of this

strange girl, alighted from the taxi, and after paying and dismissing the driver, stepped quickly into the hotel.

She took the elevator to the eighth floor. But a change had come over her. Her face was pale and she was visibly perturbed, as she went down the corridor.

Her hand sought a door knob, and as she hesitated for an instance, her perturbation seemed to leave her. She entered the room without knocking and as she did so, a middle aged man, François de Rochelle, looked up in surprise and forced a thin smile of welcome to his lips.

His words of greeting, "Sana, you are back again," must have rung in his own ears with their true bluntness, so he quickly added, "So soon, mon-cherie?"

He arose from his chair and walking over to Sana, took her face tenderly in his hands and remarked, rather peevishly, "You are pale, joujou. Did not the weather agree with you? I thought the fresh air blowing over the bridge would do you good. Did you not go there?"

The contented smile faded from Sana's face and was replaced by one of pitiful sadness as she queried blankly, "Where?"

The far-off stare in the girl's eyes and her strange

attitude gave de Rochelle food for thought that was not of the most pleasant kind.

With a scarcely conscious gesture Sana removed her hat and mechanically walked to the couch where she sat down, to look with a vacant gaze out of the window over Central Park. De Rochelle, pushing aside some papers, sought a seat next to her, and placing his arm about her shoulder, asked in a voice that bespoke his own anxiety, "What is it, mon-cherie? What troubles you today? Come, let me feel your pulse."

She laughed lightly, although not with contentment, as his hand encircled her wrist and he placed his ear upon her chest, in an effort to gauge the pulsations of her heart.

For a few moments there was a silence between them. Then de Rochelle, raising his head and looking straight into her eyes, said, "There is nothing the matter with you." Then kissing her, he whispered, "And your lips are just as sweet as ever."

Sana, slightly bored, freed herself gently from his arms, and as she did so, murmured "Oh, it is nothing." Throwing her head backward, she added, "I do not feel very well, but it is beyond me to say what it is."

A nameless fear had suddenly arisen within her heart. Yes, that was it. The fear of speaking to

him of the incident on the bridge. It would probably cause him worry and it would rob her of the delicious dreams she would weave about the man who was already enthroned in the most secret recesses of her heart.

So saying no more she rose from the couch, and left the apartment to go to her own room, leaving de Rochelle alone, in consternation and uneasy contemplation.

When she reached her room, Sana threw herself upon the bed, burying her face in the pillows. Presently, however, she rose to a sitting posture, and tangled her fingers madly in her hair, asking herself unanswerable questions.

"Why should I want to commit suicide? Does not François love me, and do I not love him with all my heart? Putting myself away in such a cowardly manner—would he ever get over it? And then, too, what of my dear mother?"

Having tortured her mind in that fashion, she slipped from the bed and approaching the dresser, she rested her hands heavily upon an open drawer and glared into the mirror. With piercing eyes she gazed at herself and gradually a smile came to her face and a new light gleamed in her eyes.

"Beautifully strange—yes, he was right. I am too young to die. And I am not going to."

With a determination born of a new and greater hope, she threw her head back and her long, lustrous hair, thus shaken loose, unrolled its dark coils down over her shoulders and far below her waistline. Her clothes seemed too tight, so she loosened them, stripping off her outer garment. There was something sirenic about her beauty as she stood there with wild-hanging hair, her breasts heaving with excitement. She commenced to rearrange her dishevelled hair, and a smile crept to her lips as she admired the reflection in the glass. She was indeed well aware of her fascinating and dangerous beauty.

And well she might be. The well-rounded neck, the soft, graciously curved and perfectly proportioned shoulders and arms, the slight tan of the skin, the great magic eyes and the pretty face with its lofty brow, surmounted by waves of dark hair, gave her the positive stamp of a strange and unique beauty: a type one so seldom finds to admire. It was not artificial, nor was it yet exotic—reality was its only expression.

Standing before the glass, she unconsciously made a few gestures and movements which held in them a captivating influence when wielded by one who was naturally so comely. Unconsciously, too, she took inventory of her personal charm. It was her woman's instinct that told her that all men would

be her willing slaves, should such a thing be her desire. But it was not. François was her first lover, and she wanted him to be the only one. Everything was to be for him and him alone.

Unfortunately, most women after they secure the man for whom they have angled do not know how to hold their catch. They neglect the very things that first drew the man to them, they forget their art in a feeling of possession and security. And then they wonder why there are so many divorces.

Sana, who was but nineteen, was well versed in feminine artfulness and had already mastered all its varied forms and gestures. Her inheritance from her mother, and the refinement and culture she had acquired, gave her both finesse and charm in addition to her amazing loveliness.

Facing the glass, she shook her head and said to herself, "To destroy myself? Never! Gypsy blood would not sanction that."

Sana hastily dressed herself and without advising de Rochelle of her movements, left the hotel and sought a friend of hers who lived on 57th Street.

This was a Mrs. O'Brien, a woman, worldly wise and one who had married young and often. Sana had met her on the steamer "George Washington," on her way from Cherbourg to New York. Mrs. O'Brien was returning from her latest honeymoon,

and the chance meeting between the two had ripened into a most intimate friendship. Regardless of what gossip may have said about her, Mrs. O'Brien was real in every sense of the word.

It was to her, therefore, that Sana turned in her trouble. Mrs. O'Brien listened to Sana's tale with a motherly interest, and explaining in part her intentions, she took Sana to the office of the famous Dr. White, on the same block.

The doctor, an elderly and affable gentleman, had been in New York for many years, and the fame that had preceded him from Europe, where he had been a professor at the University of Heidelberg, increased with his years of practice in America.

He and Mrs. O'Brien were well acquainted and with a cheery "Good evening" he led the two women from the reception room, into his office, which was splendidly furnished and embellished with numerous books, charts and artistic curiosities. There was nothing about the place to give the visitor the chill that generally comes on entering a doctor's office. Instead the room seemed to be pervaded with an atmosphere of congenial warmth.

The three seated themselves preparatory to the consultation. Sana broke the momentary silence by speaking clearly and calmly.

"My fiancé, François de Rochelle, for whom I

also work as secretary, induces me daily to walk across the bridge to get fresh air. Whenever I do so I always feel a great desire to jump over the rail and drown myself in the waters below. This sensation increases, like my love for him, as the days go by. Why it is, I do not know. I love my fiancé dearly and he returns my love with equal fervor. We intend to be married immediately upon our return to Paris. I do not wish François to be worried over me, and for that reason I have never confided in him my desire to commit suicide. Neither have I mentioned to him my intention to consult a doctor."

She paused, but Dr. White said only "Yes, go on."

"Once in a while, of an evening, as a matter of amusement François hypnotizes me. It always makes me feel much better. But the following day, when I walk across the bridge, the horrible impulse to do away with myself, forces itself upon me. Day by day the desire increases in intensity. I should have killed myself today if it had not been for a man who spoke to me just as I was about to leap over the rail. Can you tell me what the trouble is, doctor?"

Dr. White was deep in thought. He had often practised the subtle art of hypnotism as an aid to his medical work. He knew, therefore, the sinister truth that lay behind Sana's words.

Rousing himself at her question, he looked at Sana closely and asked, "Will you consent to enter the hypnotic state under my influence?"

Sana recalled to mind some of the risque situations she had found herself in upon walking from the trances, induced by her lover. The memories caused her to pause an instance, then raising her hands she cried, "No, no!"

The doctor seemed to comprehend the thoughts that were surging through her mind, and he interrupted with, "You need have no fear. Your friend, Mrs. O'Brien is here and the experiment may be of benefit to both you and your fiancé."

Her reply to the man's kindly remonstration showed how easily he had dispelled her fears.

"Yes, perhaps it will be better so."

Sana reclined restfully back within the cushioned chair and the doctor bent over her. With his hands he made a few passes before her face, with a steady look of intensity he performed the preliminaries of the hypnotist. His piercing glance held her gaze. His eyes seemed fairly to devour hers. Soon her eyes dimmed and slowly commenced to close. Her mind was giving way to his dominating will. Slowly the girl's eyes closed entirely, the muscles of her body relaxed and her mind sought another plane.

Dr. White straightened up and turning to Mrs. O'Brien said softly, "She is gone."

The doctor drew his chair close to and directly in front of Sana. In a clear voice that seemed more to make itself felt rather than heard, he propounded his queries.

"What does your fiancé, François de Rochelle, do when you are under his hypnotic influence?"

Slowly came the answer, "He teaches me some dance steps and also makes love to me."

"Do you really love him?"

"Well, I would do anything to please him, but——"

"But what?"

"I did not love him before we were engaged."

"How did that happen?"

No answer forthcoming, Dr. White commanded sharply, "Come, come, answer me."

Sana responded with "I did not care for him enough. One evening while at dinner with him in a private dining-room of a famous Parisian restaurant he hypnotized me, and directed me to love him and prepare for our marriage. From then on I began to love him, and when he was sure of my affection he disclosed to me the secret of why I loved him. But I did not mind, for my love was already deep rooted."

"Are you wealthy? Did you inherit much money?"

"No. Just a few thousands."

"Is your life insured?"

"Yes, for $50,000."

"Who will get this money in case you die?"

"François."

"Is de Rochelle's life insured likewise?"

"Yes, for $10,000."

Then like a bolt of lightning came the question, "Did de Rochelle ever direct you to commit suicide by leaping from the Queensborough Bridge?"

Sana shivered slightly. Her entire body seemed to shrink as she reached forth her arms and groped blindly in the empty air.

"Answer me!" The doctor fairly hissed the words.

In a tone scarce above a whisper came the delayed reply, "François forbade me to speak on this subject, should I ever be in a trance induced by any other than himself. I will not—I cannot answer that question. I will not!"

"Answer me. Did François direct you to commit suicide? I demand an answer."

"I refuse to speak of this matter."

Finding himself powerless to draw from that unconscious mind the answer he had hoped to get, Dr.

White turned to Mrs. O'Brien, his face but thinly veiling the disappointment he felt.

"Say nothing of this latter question to the girl," he cautioned, "it would only serve to distract her."

He turned to the girl, and once more making a pass before her eyes, directed, "Wake up."

Sana opened her eyes, rose to an upright position and slowly gazed blankly about her. Then recalling where she was and for what purpose she had come, a more tranquil look crept into her eyes.

After Sana had recovered herself, Dr. White requested that she and Mrs. O'Brien call the following day. To this they readily consented and the appointment was made.

After Mrs. O'Brien and the girl had left the office, Doctor White sank into a chair, muttering "Strange—very strange."

For a long time he sat there, with his head bowed in deep thought. Suddenly, he stood up, saying half-aloud, "Professor Grant. That's the man for this."

Going to his telephone he called up the professor's home.

"Hello, Grant. This is White. Can you possibly be at my office tomorrow noon? I wish you would come. I have a most interesting case on my hands—most interesting." A pause, then, "You will? Fine. I knew I could rely upon you. At noon, sharp."

The following day Sana and Mrs. O'Brien went to the doctor's office. He and Prof. Grant were waiting for them.

Dr. White introduced Prof. Grant, adding for Sana's benefit, "Prof. Grant can be trusted. I am sure he will be able to help you. Just do as he asks, and everything will come out all right."

Sana smiled pleasantly at Prof. Grant, who taking her by the hand said, "I shall put you under a hypnotic spell, and while under its influence you must answer each and every question I put to you. It is very important and necessary that you do so, for your own benefit. A cure cannot be effected until you have spoken as you are bidden. Remember that."

"I shall do as you say. Yes, I will. I want to be cured for the sake of François."

Little did she dream what the outcome would be. Sana, of course, knew nothing of the diabolical schemes of de Rochelle. The victim of hypnotic influence can never recall to mind, while conscious, what took place during a trance.

Prof. Grant was a powerfully built man, with a heavy black beard and a pair of black eyes that seemed to seek the innermost recesses of the soul.

Taking Sana's wrist he gazed into her eyes with a stare that ever increased in piercing power and

concentration. At first her glance met his frankly, but within a fleeting moment of time, before she could realize what was happening, Sana closed her eyes, and with relaxing muscles sank back in her chair—totally under the magic spell woven by those piercing eyes.

Grant came to the point quickly, with "Tell me. Did your fiancé, François de Rochelle, direct you to commit suicide while under his influence? What was the purpose? Tell me."

Sana hesitated.

Grant fairly shouted, "Answer me. I command it!"

Slowly the words came, barely audible to the eager listeners.

"Yes, each time that he hypnotized me he directed and commanded me to drown myself by leaping from the bridge into the river. When I was not under his power, he induced me to walk every day across the bridge. He told me it would do me good to get the air. While in a trance, he also forbade me to ever mention to him, while in a normal state, of my desire to drown myself. He impressed upon me, also, that should I ever be under the hypnotic influence of another and be questioned regarding this, I was to refuse to answer."

"Did he ever intimate his purpose in wanting you to kill yourself?"

"One night he laughed, so I recall, saying that he would then have plenty of money and could return to France to marry his schoolday sweetheart."

"Are you sure of that?" demanded Grant.

"Yes. He even told me her name. I knew her well. Her name is Edith Durex."

"Ah! Tell me, how often and for how long has he been hypnotizing you?"

"Every evening last week."

"Did you intend carrying out his demands?"

"Yes. I would do anything for François. Only yesterday was I prevented from doing so by a stranger. But I will do it as soon as I get the chance. The feeling grows stronger within me every time I cross the bridge. And something makes me go to the bridge each day."

As Sana gave voice to these strange remarks, Mrs. O'Brien could hardly suppress her exclamation "My God!"

Grant and White stepped aside and held earnest conversation for a moment. Grant spoke decisively, "The secret is out, and we would be parties to the crime if we did not take steps to prevent the act. The girl cannot be allowed to return to de Rochelle.

Suppose you ask Mrs. O'Brien to take care of her for a few days?"

"Yes, I think that would be best," and Dr. White stepped over to Mrs. O'Brien, with the question, "Do you think you could take your friend to your home and keep her for a few days? It would be the means of helping her out of her trouble."

Mrs. O'Brien, who was nearly overcome with pity for Sana, instantly consented, so eager was she to do something.

"Fine," from White, giving Grant a slight nod to indicate that his request had been favorably met.

It was then that Prof. Grant, with a smile on his face, stepped to the side of the insensible girl. His voice seemed to ring doubly deep and clear, "From now on you will never again be possessed of that desire to commit suicide. You are forever free."

Taking again her right wrist, he softly said, "It is all right, madam," and with a start Sana returned to consciousness. The happy smile upon her face told better than words her relief.

As they were about to leave Dr. White stepped to Sana's side and said gently, "Miss Sana, please accompany Mrs. O'Brien to her home. If you wish to go to the hotel you may do so, but not until after six o'clock. Do you understand?"

Sana nodded agreeably and assisted by Mrs. O'Brien she left the two men to their thoughts.

Grant broke the silence. They had been silently thinking of some plan to follow.

"A letter will do the trick. We shall put the fear of the Almighty in that rascal's heart."

"All right. Let's get busy. No time can be lost in dealing with him."

The letter was written immediately and dispatched to the hotel by messenger.

One can only imagine the thoughts that surged through de Rochelle's head when he read the following:

M. François de Rochelle
Hotel Claza
New York, N. Y.
Dear Sir:

Your secretary, Miss Sana, attempted to jump from the Queensborough Bridge to drown herself, as directed and demanded of her, while under your hypnotic influence, so that you could collect the $50,000 insurance and marry your old time sweetheart.

We advise you to leave this city before five o'clock this evening, as by six o'clock we shall have reported the case to the District Attorney.

Yours truly,

H. Grant,
Robt. E. White.

CHAPTER II

AT THE MORGUE

THE tiny hands of the ormulu clock upon the mantel told Sana's anxious heart that it was a quarter to six.

With a strange presentiment of coming evil that defied analysis and strongly against the wishes of her hostess, Sana left the house and hurried to the hotel.

Reaching de Rochelle's suite she rapped at the door. No answer came. A second rapping proved as futile as the first.

"He is out," murmured the girl as she sought her own room. She wanted to rest, but could not. For fully half an hour she paced the floor, a dreadful oppression as of some impending catastrophe weighing down upon her. She could not shake it off. The very silence of the room seemed to creep into her heart and dull her mind.

Once more she crossed the corridor to de Rochelle's rooms. This time she gave the door a resounding knock. But still no response. Gently,

almost fearfully, she tried the door. It was unlocked, so she entered the room.

A strange sight met her eyes. Disorder was everywhere. The little writing table, usually so neat and well ordered, was a confusion of jumbled papers and letters. Signs of a hasty departure were everywhere.

Sana, however, took it only to mean that some business interest had called de Rochelle away in a hurry. Somewhat relieved Sana picked up a book and going over to the deeply cushioned divan, sat down to beguile away the time pending his return. But her mind was in a turmoil and she could not concentrate on her reading.

Nervously she let the minutes creep past. At last she could stand the strain no longer. Taking the phone she called the desk clerk and had him page de Rochelle. It was of no avail. Again she tried it, but still the missing man was not to be found.

Beside herself with fear Sana called up Dr. White, but he assured her that everything was all right and that no doubt she would hear from de Rochelle later on. She tried to reason with herself that there was nothing to fear, but as the hours went by, each seemingly longer than the one before, she grew so restless that her anxiety could not be calmed.

She could wait no longer in that lonely room, so

about ten o'clock she hurried over to see Mrs. O'Brien. To her she related her fears, but she could do nothing to comfort her or offer any solution. Alarmed at Sana's state of mind Mrs. O'Brien called up Dr. White.

His words, though laconic, conveyed a world of meaning:

"All is well, and will be for the benefit of Sana. Keep her at your home tonight."

But Sana would not listen to any such suggestion. Her alarm had increased three-fold and although Mrs. O'Brien did everything to persuade her to remain, Sana hurried back to the hotel.

She felt sure that by this time her sweetheart would have returned. But the desk clerk had neither seen nor heard anything of him.

Once more she found herself within the precincts of his apartment. She could hardly keep from screaming aloud in her misery.

Her eyes roved around the empty room, faltered in their course, and the wandering gaze became a fixed stare. She had found a clew!

Upon the radiator she saw a bit of charred paper. She bent over it, studying it intently. But the message it had carried was illegible. A handful of black ashes. What was their secret? She did not touch them, but took a match, and kneeling on the floor

slowly turned the charred paper around with the match in an effort to decipher something. Here and there a word could be seen, but nothing to convey any meaning to her fevered brain. She lit the match and holding it back of the legible letters managed to read "tell clerk" "Sana" "leave," but that was all.

Deeply puzzled and not knowing what to make of it, she lighted another match, hoping to decipher other words. But before she had realized it, the flame caught the unburned part of the paper and destroyed it completely.

Unmindful of everything she sat on the floor, puzzled and heartbroken.

Brought to her senses by the chiming of midnight, the confused girl sought her room. Almost unconsciously she disrobed and threw herself upon the bed. Through the long hours of the night she lay with unclosed eyes and with every nerve strained to catch the sound of the returning footsteps of the one she loved so dearly. But she listened in vain. The dawn of the new day crept in upon her as she lay there given up to the grief that was hers.

She arose and called the desk clerk. He was sorry, but he could get no response from de Rochelle's rooms, in spite of his efforts to do so.

Mechanically Sana dressed, walking about the room without intention or aim.

It was a little after six when she again entered de Rochelle's room. It was still unoccupied—unoccupied, but yet tenanted with an almost tangible shadow—the presence of silence.

The thought that de Rochelle had deliberately deserted her did not enter Sana's mind for quite a time. When it did, it tended to clear her brain, lend calmness to her being. She made a brave attempt to figure it out, saying to herself, "What for? And if so, what will become of me? What shall I do in this strange city?" And her thoughts went back to Paris and her childhood days, when she had someone to watch over her and guide her footsteps.

Sana realized her helplessness. She was alone. Dear as she was, her friend Mrs. O'Brien could not help her, nor could she help solve the mystery of de Rochelle's absence. So she looked around the rooms once more and left.

In a trembling voice, she questioned the desk clerk, "Have you had any word from Mr. de Rochelle?"

The clerk was perusing the morning paper as she put the question to him. He started violently, gazed intently into her face, then back at the paper. Finally he said "de Rochelle? Is this the de Rochelle you mean?" And with a pencil he marked a column in the paper and handed it to her.

Her worst fears were more than realized as she read the tragic headlines:

BRIDGE JUMPER SUCCEEDS FRANÇOIS DE ROCHELLE

of

SAHARA DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION DROWNED LAST NIGHT IN EAST RIVER NEAR QUEENSBOROUGH BRIDGE ADDRESS UNKNOWN

Boys playing on the water front last night discovered a man's body floating toward the shore and with the help of a policeman it was soon recovered. The face was greatly disfigured, due to his striking the bridge pilaster. The body was removed to the morgue. . . .

Sana grew pale. Great tears forced themselves from the deep seas of her eyes and the paper, falling from her limp grasp fluttered to the floor. The clerk, noticing this, hastily walked from behind his desk and reached Sana just in time to catch her as she fell in a dead faint.

A small crowd of early hotel guests soon gathered about Sana. Among them was the hotel doctor, who ordered that the girl be at once taken to her room. A nurse was summoned and with her aid

the physician soon revived Sana. Quiet and rest, he said, were all that would be required to restore the weakened girl to a normal condition.

That morning, Mrs. O'Brien, breakfasting with her husband, read of the drowned man in the paper. Believing that Dr. White had been implicated in some foul play, she at once sought him out. Yes, he had read of it, but was as much puzzled as she.

Together they called on the prostrate Sana. She was lying on her bed weeping and softly calling the name of her lover. The couple sought to explain, and hoped, in doing so, to mitigate the horror of the catastrophe. But the attempt was fruitless, the girl refused to be comforted or quieted. Realizing the futility of their desires, they took their leave, feeling the worse for so painful and depressing a call. They decided, however, to call later in the day.

About noon Mrs. O'Brien and Dr. White again called to see Sana. Their explanations were lost on the girl. She could not comprehend and she feared to believe. All she would say was, half to herself "François, François, come to me. I need you so."

As time went by, however, Sana became calmer under the soothing words of her friends, and the three, together with Prof. Grant, who had been summoned, went to the District Attorney's office.

When they had been seated in the private office of that official, Sana and the others were greatly surprised at the attitude he immediately assumed. Without hesitation, he proceeded to implicate Sana in the death of de Rochelle. His questioning was ruthless and his accusations most bitter. From his words one would gather that Sana was the guilty one—that in some way or other she had contrived to put her sweetheart out of the way.

The processes of our law are peculiar, and to a stranger, as Sana was, to such methods, it was indeed difficult to understand. She had undergone a severe nervous strain—a terrible shock—and, naturally, was far from being in a calm collected state of mind. It was this nervousness, then, that had led the man to believe her guilty of some crime. Peculiar? Yes, to be sure—but many a man has come to realize that justice is more than blindfolded!

Dr. White, although quite familiar with incidents of this sort, was outraged at the procedure. Knowing, as he did, the true circumstances of the case, he could bear it no longer. His agitation was demonstrated clearly, when, in a cold, cutting voice, he interrupted the questioner with, "This young lady knows absolutely nothing as to the why and wherefore of de Rochelle's death. At the time of his disappearance, she was at the home of Mrs. O'Brien.

It is clear, then, that you are injuring her with your accusations."

At this, the tide of questions turned to overwhelm the O'Briens. Suffice to say, it was easy for them to establish an alibi both for Sana and themselves.

Dr. White was next to face the fire of the attack. His explanations with regard to the dead man's hypnotic influence over Sana, served only to add fuel to the flames. A barrage of questions were hurled at him in an effort to trick him into saying something that might be used against him or one of the others. White, however, was too clever a man, and knowing just what he was up against, successfully parried the thrusts of his opponent.

The outcome was, that, failing to secure any satisfaction from his visitors, the District Attorney bowed them out, mumbling, "Well, it will be investigated further."

Leaving the place, the party wended their way to the morgue, to make an effort to identify the body.

There are moments when long restrained grief and anxiety break loose from the mortal fetters that bind them—they escape the chains, though in their flight they rend the soul and tear the heart. Such a moment came to Sana as she stood in the house of the dead, awaiting her turn to look at the body of the drowned man.

She freed herself from the supporting arm of Mrs. O'Brien and with a cry of anguish pushed her way to the body lying upon the rude slab.

Silently she gazed upon the form. The facial features were wholly unrecognizable and his curly hair, through which she had so often delightedly run her fingers now was matted with dried and clotted blood. The eye that had fascinated her—the lips that had so often sought hers—all these were hideously mutilated.

Sana sank to her knees and fell across the body, sobbing, "François, François come back—come back to me—your Sana—your joujou. O François, why did you leave me? I loved you so. Oh! look at me."

And as she raved she peered with pitying intent into the sunken eyes of the lifeless man.

"Come, my child, we must be going," burst upon the ears of the anguished girl, as she moaned and wrung her hands hysterically over the form of her dead love.

"Yes," came from lips unconscious of the utterance.

"François, I must leave you—François, goodbye —goodb——"

With her farewell uncompleted Sana fell in a swoon at the feet of Professor Grant.

They carried her into the office, and after regaining consciousness she was led to the waiting automobile in which she was taken to Mrs. O'Brien's home.

The following day a representative of the insurance company called upon the O'Briens to hand Sana a check for the ten thousand dollars insurance on de Rochelle's life, of which Sana was the beneficiary.

Sana looked at the check with a feeling of disgust, and finally passed it back to the man saying, "I don't want his money."

"But it is not his money," came the answer, "It is the insurance company's money."

"Well, I don't want it anyway."

"But what shall I say at the office?"

"Tell them I shall let them know in a few days. Perhaps I shall donate it to some charity."

At this display of pride, the agent muttered something about her being an exception, and at a signal from Mrs. O'Brien, who noticed that Sana was becoming nervous, he left the room.

CHAPTER III

THE MOONSHINERS

SANA was confined to a sick-bed for several weeks, at the home of Mrs. O'Brien, following the visit to the morgue. The tragedy had well nigh shattered her nerves and only the most careful attention on the part of her host and Dr. White prevented a serious breakdown. But none could be more considerate than they, and though slowly and through periods of great suffering, Sana regained her strength.

When at last she was able to be up and about in the open air, Mrs. O'Brien prevailed upon her to accept her invitation to go with the O'Brien family to their bungalow in the Catskills. New York was sweltering. It was late in August and at times the thermometer would show one hundred in the shade.

At the earnest pleading of her friend, Sana smiled, "Oh, you are so good—you are the kindest woman I ever met."

Mrs. O'Brien laughed at that, saying, "My dear child, it is easy to be kind to you."

"I'm sure I don't know why I am imposing upon you so much."

Mrs. O'Brien stroked Sana's hair and replied, "Don't let us talk about it. You simply come along. Your being with us will be ample reward."

"Well, if that is the way you feel about it, I surely cannot refuse. Yes, I shall be glad to go with you."

"Now you are showing the proper spirit." She rang a bell, adding, "I shall tell the maid to pack at once. We can't get away from here quick enough to suit me. Perhaps you didn't know but Mr. O'Brien is on his way to the mountains already, to get things in order."

The next morning they were soon on board the river steamer, sailing up the majestic Hudson.

It was an ideal day for a river trip. The two women seated well forward on the upper deck basked in the warm sunshine, which, tempered by the cooling breeze that came down river, seemed so utterly different from the sweltering sun that beamed on the city's paved streets that they could readily have believed themselves to be in another land. Sana was very much interested in a book she had brought with her and Mrs. O'Brien likewise read from the various magazines she had purchased at the dock. So the morning hours fled quickly by, so

quickly indeed that but few words passed between them before the dinner call was sounded.

The stimulating hours spent on deck had given them a hearty appetite. They ate leisurely and contentedly, Mrs. O'Brien more than once commenting on the change that had already been wrought in Sana.

Returning to the deck they resumed their chairs and books. Reading soon became tiresome, however, and they fell to talking of this, that and whatnot, as will two ladies at any time.

The boat was now sailing the upper reaches of the river; with the mountains in the distance. Sana suddenly remarked:

"This reminds me of a journey I once took up the Rhine. Only the castles and winefields which lend an added interest and romance to that historic river, are missing here."

"True, my dear," from Mrs. O'Brien, "but the homes of our millionaires answer the purpose of the castles. As for the vineyards—they are 'verboten,' as the saying is, since our country has gone dry."

It was with a curious questioning glance, her head turned sidewise toward her companion, that Sana said, "But there is always wine at your home? Where does it come from?"

"Oh, my husband takes care of that. He used

to import his wines from France and Germany, but that, of course, cannot be done now. So we have to do the next best thing and that is buy it from those who manage to get it into the country. As for stronger liquors, anyone who has the price can get all they wish. England attends to supplying us with her national drinks, so we get all the whiskey and brandy we wish. The English have seen what a wonderful market they have here for their goods—wet goods, you understand, and they are taking the opportunity to make the best of it."

This was all news to Sana, and she was content to let her friend go on with her story.

"Yes, indeed. Special 'rum ships' are operated under the usual English governmental protection. These ships come within a few miles from shore, remaining just far enough outside to be beyond the reach of the Federal authorities. 'Rum runners'—fast motor boats—go out to these ships, get a cargo, and under cover of darkness or a favorable fog, transport it to the land of liberty."

"How is it they can smuggle in this contraband when your government is so efficient and all your authorities so honest in carrying out the law?"

"Don't worry, child. Many of those authorities, although appearing thoroughly honest on the face of things, get their rake-off. Every so often we read,

in the papers, of some such authority being caught at just that sort of thing. Why, some of those fellows are getting rich on the graft. It seems to me that laws of that kind are always enacted for just one purpose. And that is that certain politicians, or preferably their friends, may enrich themselves at the expense of the general public. The rich today can get all the liquor they want, but part of the price they pay goes into the pockets of some grafter.

"It was always the same. Why I remember the time, some ten years ago, a law was put into effect to control the sale of drinks on Sundays. Food had to be served with the drinks to keep within the law. It was a farce. The protective police and their go-betweens took the graft, and the sandwich which was served with the drinks went back and forth between the bar and the tables, acting simply as a chaperon. The same sandwich was served a hundred times or so, before it ended its career in the garbage pail. Provided, of course, some hungry individual, short a dime for food, would not swallow it with his whiskey."

From Sana, "Why, I thought people in this country always voted on issues of this kind—that is, if the people wanted the country dry, they would decide it and not the government, the servant of the people, and that for this reason you call it a democ-

racy. Only then could it, in truth, be called a 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' Also, I believe you call it 'The Sweet Land of Liberty.' What does that mean?"

"My dear child, it can readily be seen that you have not been here long."

"Mrs. O'Brien, surely you do not mean to tell me that the people of this great country have nothing to say in matters of this kind? If that is so, could their opinions count with the government in matters of less importance than the stability of society? Stranger as I am, I have noticed how big an increase there has been in crime and other matters that can be laid directly at the door of this law. The absence of light alcoholic drinks has had an effect not to be smiled at. I wonder why doctors, surely men of learning and understanding, prescribe such stimulating drinks to their patients. Is it to further weaken their bodies and characters or to strengthen them?"

"Yes, Sana, I know, we do not have the logic others have, or rather I should say, we have no logic at all. Common sense is thrown to the winds every four years during election campaigns and twice in the interim; therefore of what use is it to think? Seemingly a waste of time. Politicians, as well as others representing various interests, will state facts

or untruths, for that matter, one day and contradict them the next just to suit their interests, so the people absolutely do not know where they stand. And when a final issue is to be decided, the rogues step in and find it very easy to lead the dear public by the nose.

"Why, they do not even know the correct time,—our very clocks contradict themselves. Take the ten o'clock train, for instance. After running for five minutes in an effort to catch it, you find it is only a few minutes past nine or eleven. You see, it is all part of the game. The people must have no fixed ideas. Their minds must be as pliable as dough—to suit the interests. That is what they do not understand, as yet, in other countries. But at the same time, the public must be told over and over again that they are the foremost and freest people on the face of the globe and that settles it, as sure as the 'amen' in the church."

"And these persons, running things like that, get away with it?"

"Yes, Sana, they do, but they are only so very few that the rest do not mind them. But should one mind them, he will be a 'marked man,' like Tom Lawson who exposed the frenzies of high finance in Wall Street in his famous novel 'Friday the Thir-

teenth.' First they drove him from his large operations to smaller ones. Finally they 'broke' him. The recent sale of his four million dollar estate 'Dreamwold' was the last of the tragedies of Lawson's life. And the same tactics are used with others in political life. They get them in the long run, even if things have to be 'framed,' as many records show. I could tell you more, but I must not. Someone might overhear me and I would get myself in difficulties, even though proofs are available. They may do anything to you, but you must not get back at them, no matter how right you are. You know, it hurts their feelings to know the truth, but don't expect them to show any feeling for you. But to get back to the liquor question, Sana. I have several recipes with me, for very good drinks. I got them from the Duncans, friends of mine, you know. They have been making home-brew ever since the country went dry. The stuff they make is good and has a decided kick to it. I have had some several times at their home. I enjoy a good drink once in a while myself, you know.

"I brought copies of the recipes with me. You never know who you might meet and it is always good to be able to compare notes."

Mrs. O'Brien, after searching a few minutes

among the puffs, rouge boxes and other miscellany that filled her hand bag drew out two slips of paper which she handed to Sana.

"Here they are, you may keep a copy. Might come in handy when your own country goes dry."

Sana looked at the papers for a moment, then commenced to read, "Peach Wine—one pound evaporated peaches, two pounds sugar . . . "

Mrs. O'Brien interrupted her with a hasty "Shh. Shh. Not so loud. It is against the law for people to know how to do things."

Sana laughed heartily as she cried, "Oh, es ist verboten!"

She resumed her reading and having finished looked up with "So that is what the people make in order to get what the government doesn't wish them to have?"

"Yes. It's good stuff—a peach of a drink. Read the other."

Sana did as she was told, then laughingly, "I see you people have found a good use for that onetime useless weed to serve the pressing need of the populace. But, if I recall aright, I saw in the papers a few days ago that the government decided that even the poor defenceless dandelion came within the ban of the prohibition laws. Now that decision is being enforced I am sure that your law-abiding citizens

will see to the banishing of that innocent flower from the vacant lots."

"Yes, the question will be, who is first on the lot, I or my neighbor?"

"Has the dandelion drink a strong kick, as you call it?"

"A decided one. They tell me that one can get typsy and even 'stewed' on it, and were one to drink enough of it, he would be 'soused,' " Mrs. O'Brien laughed.

"Isn't it funny? Pretty soon the government will order your people not to eat any apples, because, as you know, there are some people who become intoxicated on eating that fruit."

"That is so. I have seen many a time, as a child, in the country, a goat drunk from eating apples, and it would run around at full speed, ending up by butting its head into trees—much to my delight."

Sana, smiling in anticipation of her next remark, continued the subject, "I presume the prohibition law has got the 'goat' of many of your people."

"Yes, of those who cannot afford to lay in a stock now and then. Ten dollars a quart is a steep price. But as you can see from the recipes, there is a way around. As I said, I have often thought that many of our laws are purposely made to be evaded, so that the grafters can get their rake-off. We find

ways to aid them. One thing is sure. The people are paying the piper and it has always been so in this country. Now, they have taken the sunshine out of our homes and let the moonshine in."

"I see. After all, you people do some scheming, it seems, to get some small liberties in spite of what seems to be, in reality an autocratic government. Now, that drinking even light alcoholic beverages is an offense, and something not to be tolerated, I suppose they will pass a law making it unconstitutional to indulge in tobacco. Then what will the people do?"

"Do? Why, nothing, so far as eliminating the law is concerned, but as for obeying it—well, you know. The more the law is disregarded the bigger the graft, and the bigger the graft the more successful the law. But I really do not know what it will lead to. I guess you are right, and after they have taken care of our smoking, some hypocrite will attempt to do away with coffee and tea."

Sana laughed, "Well there would be more sense in that. Some people cannot sleep after drinking coffee, while a glass of good beer does much to induce sleep. The caffeine in coffee is a dope, while there is no nourishment in the drink itself. That could not be said of any malt beverage."

"Sana, you spoke of such things getting our

'goat.' That reminds me of a good story. I do not believe you know this, but my brother Pat was in the saloon business. He was quite prosperous, too, and a law abiding citizen in every respect of the word. He never did a mean trick in his life and was a respected member of our church. Then came prohibition—which by the way was rather a surprise to the returning soldiers. They had been wined in France, to their heart's content, but when they returned to their own country they found they had criminal intentions if they tried to get a drink. Well, Pat went broke. He couldn't be honest and make a living at the only trade he knew. And what made him so sore was that, as he expressed, the biggest bootlegger put him out of business. You remember that there was a time when dear England had her back against the wall and was crying to America for men and ships. It is a matter of history as to how willingly and well we responded to that plea. Well, as a matter of gratitude, England, greatly against her will, allowed us to keep, for ourselves, a few former German vessels that had been tied up at our docks during the war—they were not allowed coal for quite some time prior to our entering into the war so they didn't get away. Well, we got those boats and, of course, we had the privilege of retaining and using the wooden boats we built

during the war. That was about all we got for the billions of dollars we loaned and the thousands of lives that were lost on the fields of battle. And what good were those boats when we could not successfully cope with vessels flying the flags of other nations? That is where Uncle Sam turned bootlegger. The boats running under foreign registry carried liquor—that was the whole situation in a nutshell. Americans would not travel on 'dry' boats when they could get liquor on others. So it came to pass that American vessels were allowed to carry liquors for the convenience of the passengers. And it was a good idea. It kept American money where it belongs—in America.

"But it didn't last for long. Complications arose so that Washington ruled that our American vessels must not have liquor aboard.

"But while it did last, Uncle Sam was a bootlegger—serving the interests of a few—the ship owners, and Pat and the rest of us footed the bill, by paying heavier taxes to make up for the losses incurred by the Government when the closing of the breweries, distilleries and saloons wiped out many millions of dollars income in the way of internal revenue. And making law breakers of honest citizens."

"Why don't the people protest against such reactionary laws?"

"Their 'state of mind' won't allow them. It's a case of follow the leader all the time. Why, in their treatment of their own neighbors this can be seen. Prior to the war, the Germans for instance, were credited as being a people possessed of sound logic; hard working, intelligent and above-board. The German-Americans in this country were respected as good citizens, hard workers, and held a high place in the esteem of their fellowmen. When the war came they did not change—it was our 'state of mind' that changed. Another case of follow the leader. Guided by a few we arose against them, abusing and accusing them shamefully. Every Tom, Dick and Harry felt self-ordained to search out their innermost secrets. There was a perfect orgy of tale bearing and envious tattling. The police department of one city reported receiving as many as fifteen thousand letters in one day from people wishing to report actions of their neighbors. Actions and words that had passed unnoticed for years, were suddenly found to be treacherous.

"And so it is with everything. The controlling caste makes one believe things—and if you believe it, it's so. Barnum was right."

"Who was Barnum and what did he say?"

"Barnum was an American circus man. He had been in the business for many years and in his contact with the American people he had learned to know them better than anyone else could have done. When asked the secret of his success in dealing with the American people, he summed up with the phrase, 'The people want to be fooled.' And another American, a leading railroad man, said, 'the public be damned!' So, there you have it."

An hour or so more of inconsequential conversation passed between the two women and the boat was docking at Albany.

"Come, Sana," urged Mrs. O'Brien, "let's hurry to the hotel. We can get a bite to eat before Mr. O'Brien calls for us. And perhaps we can see whether this town is any drier than New York."

The hotel dining-room was quite crowded, and they noticed that there was more than the usual air of hilarity about the place. On several tables were what appeared to be—real highballs!

This sight interested Mrs. O'Brien to such an extent that when the waiter came for their order she remarked, "George—what kind of nice drink can we have?"

"Well, we has ginger ale, lemonade, buttermilk—all what you sees on the card," indicating the beverage list of the menu—"Yassum, all those."

"But I mean something more substantial—something like they have," and she motioned with her head toward a party of women at a table nearby.

"Oh, them there ladies done brought their own substantials."

"You mean in their hip pockets"—correcting herself, "in their own flasks?"

"Sure enough, ma'am—but . . ."

"Ah, then you might be able to fix us up?"

The waiter studied the two for a moment, then, assured that he could take a chance, replied, "Guess I can," and prepared to go.

Mrs. O'Brien halted him with "Good stuff, remember, and some ginger ale."

"Good stuff is right, ma'am. Government goods, made before the war," and he was gone.

Shortly he returned with their food, a bottle of ginger ale and a small flask wrapped in a napkin. The latter he placed at the side of Mrs. O'Brien's plate, and without further ado was away to attend to other duties.

After pouring the contents of the flask, about a half pint, into their glasses, Mrs. O'Brien studied the label on the bottle and with a smile read "For medicinal purposes only." "Yes, rye whiskey, bonded by the government about two months ago. You see what I mean by the 'state of mind'?"

During the meal, enlivened by the cheering cup, they heard snatches of the conversations of nearby diners. All were speaking of the liquor situation. One woman admitted that prior to the country going dry she never thought of drinking, now she couldn't get enough. A man remarked that he and others, belonging to his club, were operating under protection.

When the check was presented Mrs. O'Brien noted that the whiskey was not charged for. But the waiter stood there with his hand resting on the table, three fingers pointed ceilingward—"Three dollars extra for the substantials."

The bill paid and the waiter gone, pleased with a generous tip, the two strolled about in the lobby.

After a few minutes wait Mr. O'Brien put in appearance.

Soon the three were seated in the Benz he had brought with him from Europe, and after taking Sana to see the State Capitol, they went spinning over the roads towards their lodge in the Catskill forests.

The mountain life did Sana a world of good. Mrs. O'Brien loved the outdoor life and would give Sana no rest. She would rout her out of bed early in the morning and the two would go for a tramp across hill and valley. Then again there would be a

tennis game to be played, or a ride on horse back that could be put off no longer. Sana rode well, in fact her riding was the envy of all who saw her. Many a long ride was had over the picturesque mountain roads—down old Rip Van Winkle's trail —down through the wonderfully beautiful Kaaterskill Canyon, or over to Haines Falls, Tannersville and Prattsville, formerly the center of America's tanning industry, and where today there stands a monument, just outside the village, dedicated to Pratt, the founder, in the form of a statue cut out of the living rock.

So employed, the remaining summer days went all too fast for Sana, and the cold mountain days drew on. But with their coming returned all Sana's youthful vigor and charm. Her face glowed with the wine of life and her eyes sparkled like winter stars.

Before returning to New York the O'Briens took Sana to see Niagara Falls. "The greatest sight in the world," chortled Mr. O'Brien, "and it's American." And Sana agreed with him.

Sana spent the winter with Mrs. O'Brien, a winter that sped quickly, broken up as it was with trips to Boston, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago and other American cities, as well as a protracted stay at Atlantic City—the year round pleasure resort. In this

way Sana came to know America better than most Americans do in a lifetime.

With the spring came a desire to return to Paris. Her friends did what they could to dissuade her, but to no avail. So reluctantly they consented.

Mr. O'Brien insisted that the day before sailing be spent at Coney Island. Sana must see it, he told Mrs. O'Brien when she frowned down the suggestion. She knew that he was just as anxious for himself as for Sana, but she at last consented—thankful, in her heart, that he had made the suggestion, because it was years since she had been there and though she would not admit it, it was only her "state of mind" that kept her from going there before. But of course, he mustn't know just how she felt about it.

There was no happier crowd at the Island that day than their little party. They "shot the chutes" —got lost in the maze, and did all the things they thought they never would do—but that's the spirit of the Island. In like spirit they joined the multitude in eating the famous "hot dog and sauerkraut," or as Mr. O'Brien called it, "liberty cabbage." He regretted this remark, because his better half broke in with "I suppose in the broadmindedness you have acquired since the war you call these frankfurters 'liberty dogs.' Don't you have enough liberties

forced down your throat without applying them to your food? Put some mustard on your liberties and the dogs will taste better."

The following day the O'Briens accompanied Sana to the steamship pier to say "goodbye."

Parting they exacted a promise that she would soon return to America and visit them. Readily Sana agreed, little dreaming of how the riddle of her life was to be solved by the Fates that guide us from the cradle to the grave.

CHAPTER IV

IN SPORTING EUROPE

IT was evening when Sana arrived in Paris. The weary railroad trip from the seaboard had made her rather tired, so instead of looking around for less expensive accommodations she went at once to the Hotel Mercedes, facing the Place de l'Etoile.

In her room, she spent the next hour or so removing the stains of travel and then, fresh as a rose, set forth to satisfy the cravings of hunger that were making themselves quite apparent. She gave the hotel dining-room but a passing glance. No, that would not do. Paris already had her in its grip! She must seek gayety and refreshment. Ah! The very place. The Café de Paris. Here she would surely meet someone of past acquaintance. For the Café was noted for the pleasure it afforded and also for the excellence of the food. Some friend of hers would surely be there.

Her assumptions proved correct. Hardly had she seated herself when a gentleman at an adjoining

table spoke rather loudly, "Well, if it isn't Mademoiselle Sana!"

Sana turned her head and recognized the speaker as a Mr. Johns, an Englishman and a friend of the head of the Companie le Developpement du Sahara. His companion was an elderly lady of distinct refinement and apparent wealth. In response to his polite bow Sana smiled back "Bon soir!"

Mr. Johns rose and came over to her table with an invitation to join his companion and himself at dinner. To this Sana gladly consented.

Mr. Johns introduced his companion as the Princess Cassandra, adding in way of explanation, "Left Russia in time to escape the Soviets."

The Princess was sipping black coffee, evidently preparing to keep awake the coming night. This she made clear to Sana by saying that they had the entire night before them and intended to wind up at Maxim's. When they invited her to go with them Sana, pretending fatigue, begged to be excused. But her pleas were useless; she must go, so she finally agreed. Her first night again in gay Paris!

Finished dining, they left the Café and went to the Thêâtre Chatelet to see the Ballet. The performance ended, the party went slumming through the Latin quartier, eventually finding themselves about three in the morning, at Maxim's. This was

the place the Princess had been so anxious to see. Sana had been there before and knew what to expect in the way of dancing, and feminine display.

But all parties must come to an end, so the rosy fingered Dawn, tinting the east, finds Sana saying goodbye to her friends, a thoroughly tired but happy girl.

Sana soon renewed the acquaintance of many old friends, but her stay in Paris was short. Too short perhaps to suit the many admirers of the lovely girl! The Princess Cassandra had been attracted to the girl from the start and after much urging she secured Sana's consent to accompany her as a companion on a tour of the continent.

Together they visited the great cities and famous resorts. Delighted as she was with the companionship of the girl, Cassandra gained in another direction. Sana proved a great attraction to the younger aristocrats of the places they visited. And it is easily seen that with such a host of admirers at Sana's beck and call, it was hardly possible that some of them should not fall to the lot of the Princess, even though it be considered charity on the part of the man.

Wealth alone does not draw in circles of their kind, and Cassandra, still beautiful for her age, recognized the advantages of having Sana at her side.

It was the philosophy of a homely woman making it her business to associate with a beautiful and charming girl. She might be left out of the play once in a while—when but one attendant was at hand. But when more than one put in an appearance she had the chances which, otherwise, she would never get. Many a mother with a marriageable daughter plays this role and not unconsciously. One seldom finds the grouchy, business-worn husband on the scene.

But regardless of the Princess' aims, these new associations brought Sana recreation and forgetfulness of the past.

It was a daily experience of Sana's to make new friends. Hers was a beauty and charm that none could resist. And few, if any, made any serious attempt to keep on resisting!

At Monte Carlo—that haven of chance, that has seen the birth of so many romances and their death, Sana met Count von Sarnoff, a nephew of the Princess. Von Sarnoff was nothing more or less than a sporting lounge-lizard, ever ready to call the tune but never willing to pay the piper.

With him it was a case of love at first sight. Sana, however, was in no mood to respond to his protestations of sincere love. Too bitterly disas-

trous had been the result of her first love and too fresh her memory of it.

Von Sarnoff, however, was not to be put off so easily. He kept continually showering her with messages of his affection, voicing his sentiments in ardent notes, accompanied by exquisite bouquets and rare gifts. He gave, with the moneyed aid of his aunt, the Princess, a series of elaborate entertainments in Sana's honor. Persistent as he was in his effort to win her love, his determination availed nothing.

One evening, as he knelt at her feet, holding her hand, Sana unburdened herself of her true feelings.

"As much as I admire you, my dear boy," she said earnestly, "I could not think of marriage. I want to be free, and after all, I do not care a great deal for this gay life."

He broke in, pleadingly, "But, Sana, we can give up this sort of life and return to my estates in Russia to live a quiet life."

"Live quietly in Russia!" Sana smiled, "you propose the impossible! Are not the Bolshevists after your very skin and did you not flee for your life? Were not your estates taken away? And now you propose to take me to that very place!"

"Do not treat the matter lightly, my beloved.

Come with me, my queen. My parents will be only too delighted to receive you as their daughter."

"But what would your aunt say of your intentions? I do not think she would approve of them."

"Of course not. She would miss your charming companionship."

"It is better, Sarnoff, that you forget me."

"On account of my aunt?"

"No," Sana said, rather hesitatingly.

"Why, then? For what reason? Do you not like me a little bit," he pleaded, peering at her with anxious eyes.

Sana, shaking her head, responded to the last question with "Yes, I do. But not enough to marry you."

"Then let me teach you how," he acclaimed eagerly.

"I can readily believe you to be an excellent teacher in that respect, but your efforts would be useless."

Anxiously, "Are you in love with someone else? Tell me."

"Oh, no. I thought your aunt had told you. . . ."

Von Sarnoff interrupted her quickly. "No. I only know that she does not want me to take you away as that would mean her loss of you, dearest."

He pressed his lips to her hand, murmuring, "Dearest, dearest."

Sana withdrew her hand and attempting to rise, said "Come, Sarnoff, it is getting late. You must go."

"I will, if you give me hope," he begged, unsteadily getting on his feet.

"I shall soon leave this place." Sana rose from her chair and turned away.

Von Sarnoff was at her side in an instant, crying in hurt surprise, "What, Sana, you are going to leave me?"

"Yes. Tomorrow, your aunt and I leave for Baden-Baden."

"Positively?"

"Positively!"

"Then I shall see you there later. But now kiss your 'little boy' goodbye."

Before Sana could realize it, or do anything to stop him, he held her tight in his arms, madly kissing her lips, forehead and hair.

Wrenching herself free Sana turned on him, a dangerous light flashing in her eyes, "I am not accustomed to that, Count von Sarnoff. I am no courtesan!"

Swiftly she crossed the room, returning with his hat and cane, which she tendered to him, with an icy

"Good night." Her manner plainly showed her contempt for his rashness.

Bowing low, von Sarnoff, even then dared kiss her hand, saying softly "Auf Wiedersehen," to which Sana had not the heart to reply.

True to her word, Sana and the Princess Cassandra left the following morning for Baden-Baden, Sana noting gladly that von Sarnoff was not at the station to say "goodbye."

Arriving at Baden-Baden they engaged rooms at the Hotel Stephanie, on the right bank of the Oos. Sana was fairly enchanted by this gorgeous hostelry, surrounded with its beautiful gardens and directly opposite the Lichtentaler-Allee. It was a fairyland, the playground of the wealth of Europe.

Princess Cassandra had many acquaintances there, and now, accompanied by the charming Sana, she was more popular than ever. Immediately she and Sana were in the midst of the social whirl. No dinner party or other function was complete without their presence.

A week, the days and nights of which were a continual round of pleasure, passed before von Sarnoff put in an appearance. Sana was at dinner among a group of friends, when he was announced. Joining the party he proved the gayest of the gay. But his eyes were constantly upon Sana. He noted her

every word—her every act. He managed that evening to offer an apology for his rudeness and Sana, believing him to be sincere, forgave him.

Again she became the target of his amorous attentions. His determination seemed fired anew. He catered to her every whim—made a slave of himself, but pressing his suit all the while.

A few days later, to cap the climax, he gave a dinner in her honor. It was one of the most exotic revels ever held at the resort and that is saying a great deal.

At this private banquet he made violent love to her. Piqued somewhat at her constant refusal to entertain his suit, and encouraged, too, by the wine he had consumed von Sarnoff kneeling at her side, suddenly reached down, grasped one of Sana's tiny feet and quickly removed the jewel encrusted slipper. Rising to his feet, rather shakily, it is true, he filled the slipper with champagne, and holding it aloft in one hand, the other sweeping over the select assembly, he cried, "To the health of Sana, the Queen of Queens." Then amid the cheers of the diners, he drank from the slipper.

Around them a group of professional dancers, scantily attired, were performing risque solo dances, but von Sarnoff, sensual though he was, had no eyes for their display. But like Herod of old begging

The eager von Sarnoff grasped the shimmering garment, buried his face into its perfumed folds and looked up with eyes of lust and passion.

Salome to dance, he pleaded with Sana to give them an exhibition of her dancing art. What tempestuous thoughts ran through her mind, one cannot tell, but with a wild laugh and the cry "I will" Sana sprang up on the table, and kicking off the remaining slipper sent it flying across the room. Her dinner gown was too long to allow of much freedom, so with deft hands she lowered the shoulder straps and cast it off. The eager Sarnoff grasped the shimmering garment, buried his face into its perfumed folds, and looking up with eyes full of lust and passion shouted, "This is the dance of the virtuous vampire."

Sana was dancing the dance de Rochelle had taught her while under his hypnotic influence. Wild and free! It spoke of desert nights and starry skies; of whispering winds and silent places. A dance of beauty. Suddenly she ceased dancing. The fire had died down. The coaxing, passionate creature was gone, and in its place stood just a girl.

Springing from the table, she demanded her dress. With a mocking laugh von Sarnoff sprang aside, crying "No. I shall keep it always as a souvenir of passion's maddest moment."

With a look of supreme disgust at the laughing guests, Sana pulled the cloth off an adjoining table, regardless of the flying dishes and silver, and wrapping it about her body, fled from the room, followed

by von Sarnoff, pouring forth words of endearment and affection.

Rushing to her rooms, she slammed the door in his face with a cry that bespoke the agony in her heart, "Keep away! I hate you!"

That night, counseled by heads wiser than his own, von Sarnoff left the place.

. . . . . .

Among Sana's various friends at the Stephanie was Herr Heinecke, a young German engineer.

Heinecke was combining business with pleasure during his stay at the hotel. He had been sent to Baden-Baden to supervise an electrical development in the suburbs of the city, and took advantage of the opportunity to partake of the baths, the efficacy of whose waters are known the world over—in fact the Romans were aware of it, in the days that are gone, and spoke of the waters as Aquae Aurelias.

But the waters and his work were not the only things to occupy his thoughts. There was Sana. If one could question his mind or seek out the innermost regions of his heart, Sana would loom up high above even his work. His work could be neglected, he reasoned with his conscience, but not Sana. She could not, would not be neglected.

Even though she had already refused his offer of marriage he was determined to win her.

Sana and he were at the Hotel Messmer, one afternoon, enjoying the music and refreshments, which were delightful. The hotel was a favored resort and attracted a large number of noblemen and people of wealth.

Heinecke had just asked Sana a second time for her hand when she felt a strange sensation stealing over her. It was as if some power were seeking to enter her mind and control her body. Against her will she turned her head to look behind her. For a moment she stared in amazement. Her breath came in gasps. She sank back in her chair as though on the point of fainting, then finding her voice she shrieked "de Rochelle!"

It was but too true. There at a table a few steps away sat de Rochelle, as forbidding as ever. He had seen her with Heinecke and resorting to the powers he had exercised of old, he concentrated his mind upon hers, while staring at the back of her head, thus drawing her attention to him.

Heinecke, who was somewhat upset by this strange and unaccountable state of affairs, questioned Sana as to the cause. As briefly as possible and in a low trembling tone, Sana answered, "That man, the fourth table over, is François de Rochelle, who was once my sweetheart. He possesses a strange hypnotic influence over me and may cause

me to commit rash acts. Even now I feel his power and I am afraid."

Sana's companion looked over to de Rochelle, who did not once take his eyes from the girl, although he was aware that Heinecke was watching him. This attitude made even the phlegmatic Heinecke furious. As in the days when he was a member of a student's corps, he was ready to fight a duel at a moment's notice—the three scars on his right cheek bore mute testimony to this spirit of younger days. So calling a waiter he sent his card to de Rochelle.

Rochelle well knew the intent of that action. He picked up the card, looked at it and with a sneering laugh, tore it into bits, tossing the scraps of pasteboard back on the salver, in such a way that there was no mistaking his meaning.

Heinecke could only stare, muttering to himself, "No satisfaction to be had. Too bad."

Sana was eager to get away from de Rochelle, from the hotel, from everybody, so hurriedly taking Heinecke by the arm, she fairly dragged him away, saying, for want of something better, "Now, look at what you have done!"

From the time that Sana had been carried unconscious from the morgue, in New York, to the hour of her departure for Europe Sana had been under

the constant care of Dr. White and the O'Briens and they had purposely withheld from her the news that the body that had been found in the river was not that of de Rochelle. A newspaper reporter, who was at the scene of the drowning when the body was recovered, took it upon himself to say that the man was de Rochelle. Some cards and papers had been found on the body bearing the name of "François de Rochelle," so it was as a "François de Rochelle" that the man was buried. As a matter of fact it developed a few days later that the suicide was a young bank clerk, who, with de Rochelle, had speculated heavily with part of the funds raised for the purpose of carrying out the work of the Sahara Development Organization. Things had gone wrong on the market that day and the clerk had called on de Rochelle, with a view to securing some money to cover their margins. De Rochelle was not to be found, but on the table lay a note, addressed to Sana, in which he stated that he had been discovered at last. He was going away forever. He asked her, also, to tell the bank clerk of his leaving.

The clerk, believing at once that de Rochelle was referring to his shady dealings on the Street, in his note to Sana, set about to destroy the note upon the radiator. He had been equally guilty in these money matters and wanted to hide his trail as much as pos-

sible. It was while crossing the Bridge that his mind, haunted by the fear of possible consequences, gave way and he took the fatal leap.

Once more had Fate thrown Sana and de Rochelle together. To the girl it meant grave dangers and misery. In the silence of her apartment she determined to leave the place—secretly if necessary. Slipping quietly down to the lobby of the hotel, she dispatched a message to her mother, announcing her intention to come home. Sana realized what she would have to sacrifice, but nothing counted. She only wanted to get away, far away from de Rochelle.

The following day, about noon, Sana was crossing the gardens at the Kurhaus, where hundreds were promenading and listening to the band. She had been shopping, purchasing little odds and ends, among them gifts for her mother.

Suddenly a hand was placed upon her arm. Frightened she turned to confront de Rochelle. She tried to evade him, but he only grasped her arm more tightly so that escape was impossible. In a low, but not unkindly tone, de Rochelle spoke, asking her to join him at lunch at the Messmer. Sana refused and while he was insisting upon her doing so, aid came in the form of Heinecke.

A few curt words from him placed de Rochelle on the defensive. An instance later, however,

Heinecke had taken his glove and struck de Rochelle across the face. Taking Sana's arm he walked off, leaving the furious de Rochelle, whose face had turned to ashen gray, to cry, "You will meet me?"

Heinecke turned, drew himself up to full height and with a stiff bow, retorted, "I am at your service!"

The next morning, before Heinecke had arisen, a knock was heard at his door. The seconds of de Rochelle were announced. They had come to inform him that de Rochelle was the insulted one and that he was exercising his privilege of choosing weapons. He had decided upon pistols, shots to be exchanged until one or the other fell.

Had Heinecke the option he would have chosen the sabre of his student days, that being his favorite weapon. However, he was not afraid. His army training had taught him the use of a pistol, and in his heart he was sure that this affair would certainly win Sana.

Sana, however, on hearing of the coming duel, sought Heinecke and begged him to desist, saying "de Rochelle is an expert in the use of a pistol. I have seen him sever a telephone cord at twenty paces and hit a plum I had thrown into the air."

To which entreaties Heinecke replied, with a

shrug of his shoulders, "This is an affair of honor."

The next morning, the two duelists, with their seconds and a doctor, went to a secluded section of the Black Forest, about an hour's ride from the resort. The day was bright and the cleared spot in the forest, where blood would flow and probably a life be sacrificed, had been well chosen by the seconds the preceding day.

The preliminaries over, the two men took their stand, facing each other at fifteen paces. Pistols were leveled. They awaited the word to fire—Heinecke cool and determined, de Rochelle perhaps equally determined but rather shaky, having spent the previous evening drinking champagne in celebration of the coming duel.

Sana was up before daybreak that morning. When Heinecke left, she followed in an automobile, at a distance, so as not to arouse suspicion. At a road crossing she had lost track of Heinecke's car, but shortly afterward discovered it, and another, parked by the roadside. She ordered the chauffeur to stop the car, jumping from it before it had come to a standstill.

As she did so, she heard two shots ring out simultaneously, echoing and re-echoing through the silent forest. In feverish haste she ran in the direction from whence the sound had come. Another deafen-

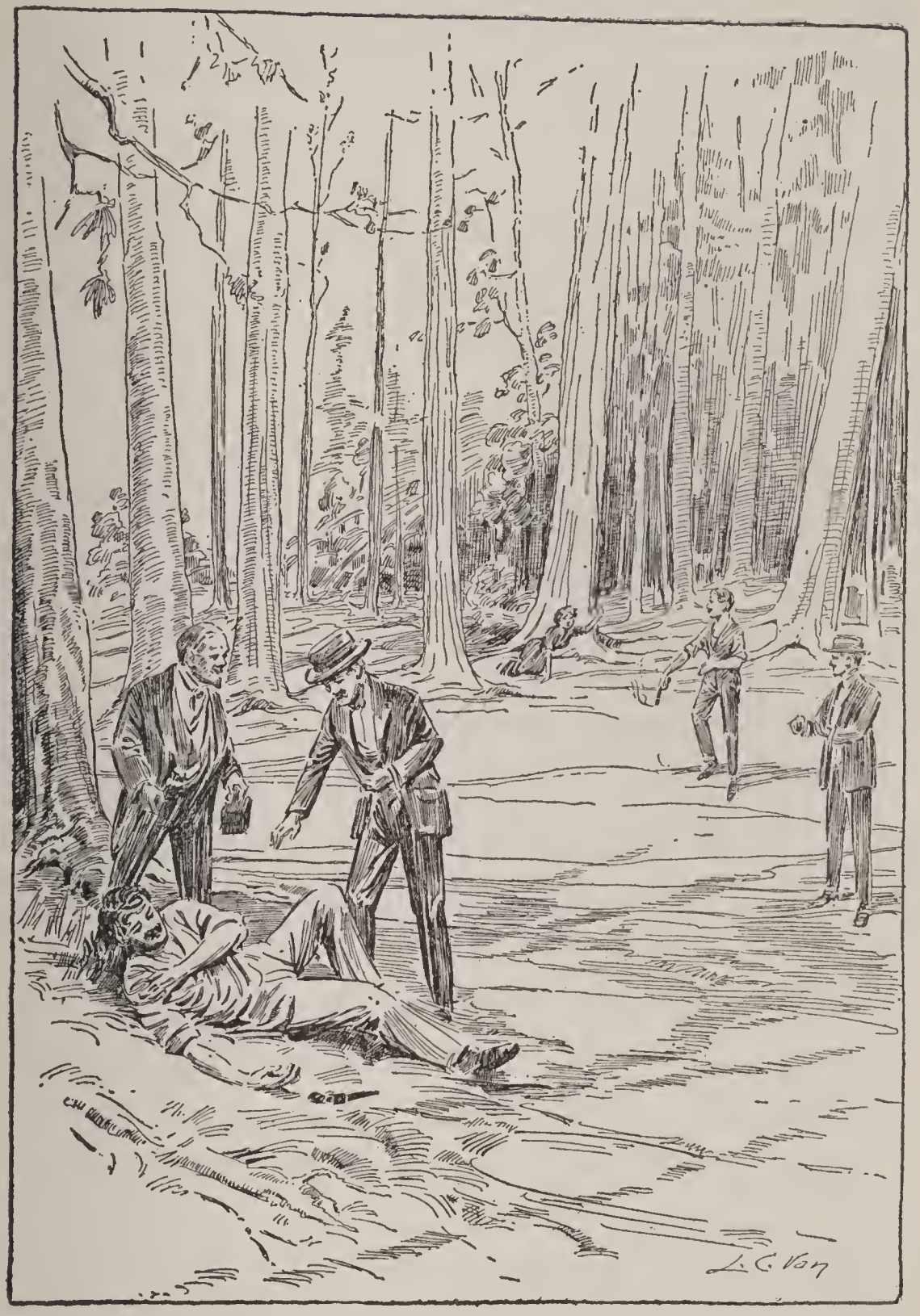
ing report vibrated the morning air. Turning aside, Sana came upon the clearing. The two combatants still held their ground, while the seconds were reloading the pistols. The weapons again in their hands, Heinecke and de Rochelle renewed the combat. As they leveled the pistols, Sana wanted to cry out, but running forward blindly, stumbled and fell. As she arose, she heard the word "Three" and looking up saw the flash of the shots. To her horror, she saw one of the men, she could not tell which, waver and sink helpless to the earth.

"Oh, God!" The words came in a quivering cry. Because of her, a woman, a man had just fallen wounded, perhaps dead.

At the cry a man stepped forward. It was Heinecke. He pointed in the direction of de Rochelle, who, badly wounded in the right shoulder, was being attended by the doctor.

Sana looked at the fallen man. Then came reaction. With a withering look of scorn, and unmindful of Heinecke's outstretched hand, she upbraided him, "Shame unto you! You have soiled your hands and stained your soul with the blood of a creature not worthy of the bullet you fired into him!"

Heinecke looked at the girl in a strange, curious way, then looking toward de Rochelle, he spoke in



At her cry he stepped forward, pointing in the direction of de Rochelle, who, badly wounded in the right shoulder, was being attended by the doctor.

a low and somewhat sad tone, "If it had not been for his coming, you might have been mine by this time. I feel like putting this man out of your way and life forever. Leave me—for a while at least."

Sana, realizing his desire, did not move, but whispered beseechingly, "Heinecke, I implore you, stop! I do not love you, so why risk your life for me? Consider, please."

Her plea was in vain. Heinecke, changing his tone of voice and manner, commanded her to leave. Upon her refusing to do so, he attempted to gently lead her away, when the mocking voice of de Rochelle reached them. He had gotten to his feet.

"Here! Herr Heinecke!" The words came with a sneer. "You shall not hide behind a woman's skirts. Stand your ground, you coward!"

With this he grasped the pistol his second had reloaded and aimed it at Heinecke.

His sneering laugh chilled Sana's blood as he continued, "Come back. I will kill you like a dog in this woman's presence."

Heinecke, with a shrug of the shoulders, awaited the shot.

De Rochelle had barely time to pull the trigger when the gun was wrested from his hand. Two men had jumped from the brush behind him and were now holding him a prisoner. De Rochelle de-

manding an explanation of what he termed "an outrage," was politely informed that he was under arrest and was shown a warrant as their authority.

The sight of this caused Sana to give a sigh of relief. Her plan had worked!

After Heinecke had told her of the proposed duel, Sana finding her pleas of no avail, sought to prevent the combat in another manner. She, of course, had been informed on her return to Paris of the manner in which de Rochelle had run the affairs of the company he represented in New York. She knew, too, just how much of the company's money he had appropriated for his own uses. So with this knowledge in mind she went to one of those detective agencies, to be found the world over, where "hard cash" is a means to an end and placed her proposition before them. Yes, it could be done! They would do anything for a consideration.

Accordingly two of the firm's hirelings trailed de Rochelle that morning, armed with a fake warrant calling for his arrest and extradition to France, to answer charges of embezzlement. They had arrived on the scene a little late, but, nevertheless, in time.

Turning to Sana, de Rochelle addressed her, with supreme sarcasm, "You have done a noble thing. Noble indeed! To save your lover you have be-

trayed me. But wait. My love for you has gone. Insatiable hate has taken its place. As I have adored you in the past, so do I despise you now! I shall be free again, and I assure you, by God, that the day shall come when you will lie before me prostrate and pleading. And all your pleading shall be in vain!"

Raising his voice until it fairly shrieked at them he added, "You shall go down with me! It may take time, but I shall get even with you!"

Heinecke was about to spring forward, but Sana restrained him with "Please don't."

To which Heinecke replied, his lips twitching with scorn, "I'm sorry I couldn't finish the job."

. . . . . .

That evening, leaving notes for her friends, the Princess Cassandra and Heinecke, Sana secretly left the gay watering-place to go home.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT DESERT

THE plan for flooding the Sahara, as fostered by the French Government, attracted widespread attention. Even in America, accustomed as it is to great engineering undertakings, the plan created a great deal of interest, much of it critical.

Among the Americans to challenge the proposed work was Carl Lohman, a New York engineer and writer of international reputation. Lohman counted among his friends the foremost editors, men whose fearless pens are watched the world over by financiers and politicians. The pages of the daily press were open to him and in them he attacked the plan.

So thorough was he in his attacks and criticisms that the French authorities invited him to submit alternative plans. To this end, Lohman left for the Sahara on an inspection tour, arriving at the Gulf of Gabes, on the Mediterranean Sea, where the canal was to be built.

Here he met the pilot who was to lead him over

the desert to study the territory at close range. After studying the canal site, on horse back, for a few days, they boarded an aeroplane, which was well provisioned, and soon they were flying over vast stretches of sand. They made wide detours, in their flight, so as to get a more general view of the situation. Finally they turned southward to reach Timbuktoo on the Niger river.

Two nights were spent on well selected ground. On the third day they came to the Queen City of the Sahara, Timbuktoo, where they intended replenishing their gasoline supply, and thus be able to return to the Mediterranean coast.

During the entire flight Carl was busy making copious notes to be used in connection with his plans on his return to America.

Carl was proud of his mission. And rightly so. The son of a New York banker, with the advantages of a family name and all that wealth could buy, he had spurned them, rising in his profession solely by his own ability and perseverance.

His college days over, Carl had gone to San Francisco. Here he secured employment with an engineering concern engaged in extensive hydraulic and land irrigating developments. A few years of this work and he returned to New York, where he joined an efficiency engineering firm. Here, too, he showed

his ability. By his methods of handling material in various manufacturing plants much money was saved and with greater efficiency. Electric stations, he proved, could be operated at less cost, while in the field of street lighting, several cities benefited by his knowledge, securing better light and at a great saving to the municipality and the electric power companies.

Carl recognized as his greatest asset the teachings of his parents. From childhood he had been taught by them the virtue of "Economy and Efficiency." It had been their watchword through life and he was determined that it should be his. Not alone to himself but to those who came to him for advice did he preach this doctrine.

His books and numerous scientific publications, too, brought home to the reader the value of those two words. Before establishing himself in a business of his own, he widened his field of activity, going to the Charlottenburg University to study city planning and its kindred subject, municipal engineering. Charlottenburg was the only college teaching these subjects, although German cities, for the past two generations, have been practicing the art in connection with municipal improvements.

His studies took him on extensive trips over Europe to study the art of the great masters Sitte,

Stuebben, Baumeister, Hausmann and others. He visited the medieval cities of Nuremberg, Rothenburg, Regensburg and others, all of which showed that the Romans, who laid the original foundations of these cities, had certain definite knowledge of city planning. However, these early city planners did not impart their theory but left only their accomplishments as a record of their work. It remained for the Germans to place the art of city planning on a scientific basis, and realizing the great benefits derived, other countries fell into line, following the system established by the Germans.

During his travels Carl did not fail to visit the ancient Roman and Greek cities, where the remains of once great structures and roadways testify to the skill of the city builders.

While L'Enfant, who planned the city of Washington, admittedly the most beautiful city of America and one of the finest in the world, enjoyed the double good fortune of having the support of the founders of the Republic and an unencumbered site upon which to build, the problem in most cases today is to replace existing cities and provide for future developments.

Upon his return to America, Carl located in New York, opening an office as consulting engineer and advisory city planner. He applied his knowledge

to getting "hard cash," but he very often worked for little or no compensation. It did not matter to him—all he wanted to see was the ultimate result.

His reputation as a successful engineer and writer became widespread, with the result that he was besieged from all sides with requests to engage in industrial campaigns and the like. Quite a number of concerns owe to him and his writings the fact that they got out of the rut and were able to re-establish themselves on a sound financial basis.

To him, also, came concerns with shady reputations in the hope that he would lend the weight of his name to their prospectuses. But they were politely requested to seek such assistance elsewhere.

But city planning was his forte. It appealed to him as did no other work. He recognized the great opportunity for the replanning of American cities, so long neglected with such costly results as are seen in the unnecessary congestion and crowded conditions of some portions and the backward development of others—in the slums on one hand and the inaccessible suburbs on the others—so characteristic of the majority of our cities.

The citizens of a small town never imagine that it will become a large city. They may, at times, dream of it as spreading out around the nucleus in which they live and they may frequently boast of the

progress their town has made in the previous decade, but the day that will see their town a great city seems so far distant that, as a rule, they do not imagine it will ever occur.

Time slips quickly by and the sites for great improvements, which might have been laid out and reserved for convenient plans, that only need to be committed to paper, become impossible save at enormous and prohibitive expense. It thus happens that many cities, expanded over ground that once was made up of farms, have street plans originally determined by the fancy of the home-wandering cow and her calf. But great volumes of traffic must inevitably follow the path marked out by these dumb animals, unless costly changes be made.

Carl was aware of the great importance, to cities large and small, of having plans prepared by experts to serve as a guide for the gradual development of the city on a scientific basis.

Since engaging in such work, Carl had received many contracts for planning new towns and remodeling old cities. Besides he did considerable work along electrical lines. His spare time was occupied in writing books and contributing articles on city planning, industrial efficiency and national economy, to various newspapers and magazines. Carl was recognized as a man of great versatility. His pres-

tige as an authority in his profession rose rapidly and his absorbing interest in his work caused many complaints from old acquaintances who still felt the lure of Broadway.

With a sudden jar he was shaken out of his mental dream as to his own importance. The aeroplane, in landing at the outskirts of Timbuktoo, struck a sand dune and was damaged considerably, and its occupants badly shaken up, although not seriously injured.

They climbed from their seats and while the pilot looked after his aeroplane, Carl stood on the fringe of the Great Desert, wondering how he would solve that vast problem of so world-wide a character. He felt the importance of his mission. The realization came to him that his work would have a unique influence on the world. Its welfare he held in his hand.

He had done important work before. But now! Alone he could move the world—change the great laws of nature! He could create a new land or destroy an old one. He could do this—he—Carl Lohman! Was it to be wondered that his bosom heaved with emotion as he gazed out over the endless barren wastes, which, at his command, could be made to blossom with the fullness of the Earth's fruits.

How true, he thought, the saying "Knowledge is Power." That phrase answered the questions in his mind. Yes, his knowledge would bring it about.

A mental picture came to him, like a fata morgana, a mirage of the desert, reflected high in the heavens. A picture of the day to come.

This picture, however, came to an abrupt end. The pilot, who had been endeavoring to repair the damaged aeroplane, had come up to Carl, saying, "The damage to the engine is too great to be repaired here. What are we going to do now?"

"I have been thinking of that. I think we should go by camel to the north and have some fun."

The other smiled "Fun? Fun you will get all right if you should ever fall into the hands of the bandit tribes that infest the sands. I know them. During the war I was handled rather roughly by them in France, although I was no enemy of theirs. They had been forced into the fight and they wanted to be savage. And they knew how. You talk about the Turk. He was nothing compared to them. At least the Turk was fighting for his country—these just fought for the sake of killing. They would have put an end to me, had not help come in time."

"All right! We can talk matters over tomorrow. Let's find a hotel, if there is one, where we can get a bite to eat. I'm starving."

The pilot rejoined, "All right, so am I."

The aeroplane had landed but a short distance from the city and it had already attracted a host of bewildered people. They had never seen an aeroplane before, so on they came, old and young, black and white, to examine the strange monster from the sky. No less strange to them appeared the two men who had come with it. In language unknown to Carl, they pointed from the machine to the men, showing plainly their awe and fear.

A French army officer came up to Carl and questioned him as to the accident, but Carl could only refer him to the pilot, who had returned to the wrecked machine, the motley mob scattering to all sides at his approach.

After the pilot had secured all that was likely to fall prey to the thieving fingers of the crowd—the Arabs and their kin are born thieves—he and Carl set out for the hotel to which the officer had directed them.

As they approached the hotel, the proprietor, a shifty-looking Arabian-Jew, stepped out to greet them with a great show of welcome and a greater anticipation of gain.

Carl had learned from his pilot that caravans left very seldom and at irregular intervals for the north, because of the unexplored conditions of the desert

and of the still greater danger of being beset by the roaming bands of bandits, who ever lay in wait for caravans of merchants.

He came to the conclusion, therefore, after studying his maps, that he had best secure an automobile to take him to Bammurka, from which point he could take the railroad to St. Louis or Dakar on the Atlantic coast. From there he could get passage to New York, while his pilot could easily return by water to Algeria. This meant a tedious journey of some five hundred miles, by automobile, down the Niger and Joliba rivers, but it appeared the most feasible plan.

He questioned the hotel keeper as to the prospects of securing an automobile and to his regret was told that such a thing was out of the question. There were a few automobiles to be sure, but there was not enough gasoline in Timbuktoo at that time to last half the trip. In fact every one of the machines was useless because of this scarcity of fuel. Carl recalled, too, that they had been forced to land the aeroplane because the gasoline supply was getting low.

"Why not go by caravan?" he was asked.

"Caravan? When?" Carl questioned. This was more to his liking.

"Three days from now. Thursday morning.

Yesterday a tourist party came in. They had made arrangements months ago for a special caravan from here to Mogador. You can join them. It could easily be arranged."

Carl voiced his thanks with a bit of silver.

The Jew added, "They will be here tonight at seven. I will tell them you wish to meet them. By the way," his eyes glinting craftily, "there will be an entertainment tonight for these travelers. Do not miss it. It will be worth your while."

Arrangements to join the caravan were easily made. The tourists, after hearing his story, readily consented to his request to be allowed to accompany them. In fact they wanted him to come. He had seen the desert from aeroplane and could tell them more about it than even the guides.

After a short chat, during which the success of the journey was toasted by Carl, he excused himself and went to his room to write the following report to the New York newspapers.

"I find that there are no great difficulties to be encountered in building the canal, which has to be about fifty miles long. The waters of the sea, coming through this canal would flood an immense area, forming a great inland sea. The canal could be made sufficiently large to permit the passage of ocean steamers through it into the inland waters.

"While there is a possibility of the canal being silted up with dune sand, it is estimated that it would take from 1,000 to 1,500 years for this to occur.

"The cost of the canal would be at least $100,000,000, and it would take five years or longer to build it. Laborers could be drawn from the interior tribes, such as Senegals, Moroccans, Algerians and Turcoes.

"The Gulf of Gabes is separated by a ridge some forty feet across and perhaps one hundred and fifty feet high, from Shat-al Fejej, a depression which runs southwest into the Shat Jerid, which, in turn, is separated from the Shat Garsa only by a still narrower ridge. Shat Garsa is succeeded westward by a series of smaller depressions and beyond them lies the Shat Melrir, whose northwestern extremity is not far from the town of Biskra, a favorite winter resort of North Africa.

"The original author of this scheme to flood the Sahara was Colonel François Roudaire, who proposed it some fifty years ago to the French Government. Roudaire's plan was strongly advocated between 1870 and 1885, receiving support from Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French builder of the Suez Canal, now controlled by the English, who acquired it through crafty diplomacy. That plan fell through, because of the adverse criticism and it will fall

through once more. While it would have a certain great result for France, the consequences due to the change of climate would not only affect Africa, but would be disastrous to the entire world.

"After having inspected the site of the proposed canal I have been piloted by a French aviator over the mysterious deserts. Contrary to my own and most people's ideas, I found to my delight, that the desert is not all sand.

"The story my father once told me, when I was a small boy, came to my mind. He said that the easiest way to catch the lions of Africa was to sift the sands of the deserts; and what did not go through the mesh of the sieve were the lions.

"We flew over depressions and mountains, ranging from 100 feet below sea level to 6,000 feet above. In isolated instances, the mountains rose up to a height of 8,000 feet or more. A few of the mountains were of volcanic origin as could be seen from the craters and cones.

"It is said that some of these mountainous regions, never actually explored, are the dwelling places of the descendants of pre-historic cave men. Whether this is true or not I cannot say. I kept a sharp lookout for them, but did not succeed in seeing them.

"We passed over valleys through which, at one

time, water must have flowed. Vast tracts of loose stones and pebbles were to be seen, their surfaces highly polished by the sand winds passing over them.

"On every hand there was sand. Sand and more sand. The sand dunes seemed to be without end. These dunes, or sand waves, for that is what they really are, vary in length and height and run diagonally to the prevailing winds. Shifting under the force of the wind, they travel slowly in different directions, filling old depressions and leaving new ones in their wake. Oases have been literally swallowed up by these sand waves, which, in their irresistible march, passed over them and on, leaving no trace of what was previously a garden spot in the desert.

"Most curious are the inland mountains, known as the 'Witness of the Arabs.' These are the remains of a one-time widely distributed mountain terrace. The sand winds and storms passing over them through the years have robbed them of most of their bulk, leaving only the solid hard cores, which now form a group of flat-topped pyramidal mountains.

"While flying over these mountains, a band of savages began shooting at us. They had become frightened at our aeroplane. Luckily we were high enough to be beyond range of their rifles and no damage resulted.

"A great many oases were to be seen. Some

cover great areas, while here and there are smaller ones. Some of the smaller ones are grouped together.

"Most of these oases are rich in vegetation, especially in fruits, such as apples, peaches, oranges, citrons, figs, grapes and pomegranates. The date, however, predominates. The oases are the home of the date palm and these trees play a most important part in desert life. Staple foods, such as corn, wheat, rice, barley, durra and dukhn, are also grown. Besides these a few other tropical products are cultivated.

"Asses, camels and a breed of black cattle are the main domestic animals. Of course the full-blooded horse is to be seen in large numbers.

"The population, made up of Berbers, Arabs, Maurers, Negroes and Jews, is chiefly engaged in cattle raising and trading. The caravans, in their journey across the desert, pass through various oases at which they replenish supplies. It is at these oases that trading is liveliest. For products of the oases are traded guns, ammunition, gold dust, clothing and quite often slaves brought with the caravans from the seacoast cities.

"France also contemplates building railways through the Sahara to furnish easy communication between Algeria and Nigeria. This proposed plan

has already found many advocates. Two principal railroad routes have been suggested: one taking the easterly line from Biskra through Wargla to Air and Zinder—the route followed by Fourneau in 1898, under the protection of Major Laury; the other starting from the terminus of the most westerly railway already existing at the Harbor of Casablanca, and reaching Timbuktoo by way of Igli and the Tuat Oasis. But these plans are dreams. At any rate the railways themselves are a long way off, as they would not earn interest on the capital invested.

"For a long time to come travel across the Sahara will be by caravan. There are five principal north and south caravan routes. One from Rio de Oro leads over the Waran Desert to Timbuktoo on the Niger River; one from Mogador, in Morocco, goes through the sand hill region of Igidi to Timbuktoo; another from Tangiers and Algiers through the Tuat Oasis to Timbuktoo; another from Tripolis, over Ghadames and Ghat at the Tasili Mountains to Kano and still another from Tripolis over the Oasis Blima to Kuke, at the Tsad Sea, and then on to Bengasi and Wadai. The foremost are those leading to Timbuktoo, the Queen City of the Sahara.

"Long before Christ, some of the present routes were used by the Romans in their explorations of the

desert for its products. In the fourth century, Field-Marshal Salomon penetrated from the north to Timbuktoo and as far as the Sudan. Missionaries, preaching the doctrines of Mohammed and Islam, in crossing the desert, used the same routes as are used today. For centuries, so far, there has been nothing new under the sun of the Great Desert, with probably the exception of the Frenchman Lebaudy's adventure in 1913, attempting to crown himself 'Emperor of the Sahara.'

"Progress is not made here as in other countries and as a result this vast land is the least populated of any on the face of the earth. While the climate is not what might be termed unhealthful, the climatic conditions of the desert are, however, the cause of the stagnation. The temperature ranges from seventy to one hundred and twenty degrees, Fahrenheit, during the day time, while the nights are cold with a temperature of thirty-five to forty-five and quite often below zero.

"Very little rain falls, and the desert rarely experiences a rain storm. However, frequent and terrific electrical discharges take place and the desert dweller is ever in fear of the terrible blizzard-like sand storms.

"But for all that, the Sahara has played her part in history. In the days of Julius Caesar and the

later Roman emperors, the Sahara was called the 'Granary of the Roman Empire.' Rome, then at the pinnacle of power, took the wealth of the desert. Slaves were carried to Rome together with vast quantities of grain, oil, wine, leather, spices and perfumes. Served and fed at little or no cost by the subject colonies of North Africa, the Romans were enabled to lead a life of the maddest luxury, idleness and self indulgence.

"While landing near Timbuktoo yesterday, the pilot drove the nose of the plane into the sand, wrecking the machine. Neither of us was hurt. Will stay here for a few days' rest, and will then take the first opportunity to return to America."

The article finished, Carl posted it immediately. He went out to smoke a cigarette and later, for want of something better to do, sauntered over to the dance hall designated by the hotel keeper that afternoon.

CHAPTER VI

THE DANCE OF THE VAMPIRE

THE dancing place, an open space surrounded by palms and date trees, under which were tables and chairs for the guests, was already quite crowded when Carl arrived. As he looked about for a seat, an Arab, apparently acting as an usher to the Europeans, guided him through the crowd to a seat near the arena. What mattered it if the seat were already occupied by another Arab? A few words and the threat of a kick sent him scurrying away, although Carl noted, with a smile, that he waited nearby for the other, apparently in anticipation of part of Carl's tip.

A native tribe was performing one of their wild desert dances, swinging their guns and great scimitar-like knives in a most fascinating way—howling and shrieking at the top of their lungs and accompanied by the deafening noise of a native band.

The dance over, there was a wild scrambling among the dancers to get the coins that were tossed

to them by the spectators. The last coin tossed and picked up; the last dancer aided from the scene by a prod of a booted foot, a man stepped into the circle and in a loud voice proclaimed,

"You are now going to witness the 'Dance of the Vampire' by the Europeanized Desert Flower. This young siren has been proclaimed by the art judges of Europe to be one of the most lovely women on earth. Her beauty is beyond words and her dance extraordinary! But judge for yourself! Behold Sana, our Desert Flower. None can rival her. Not even the beauties of the harem!"

Musing to himself, Carl muttered, "If I were not in Africa I should swear I was at Coney Island."

The eyes of the audience are turned toward a tent near the dancing space. There is a low rumble from the tom-toms of the native orchestra. The flaps of the tent are pushed aside and a young woman steps out. For a moment she stands there, looking over the crowd as if in defiance. Then with a graceful movement of her arms she casts aside the native shawl in which she is wrapped.

The spectators stir in their chairs. From all sides come the "ahs" of expectant watchers. Carl, too, is visibly affected. The "barker" was right. The woman, whoever she was, could take a beauty prize anywhere.

The music grows louder while the dancer with fleet steps, hurries to the middle of the arena to commence her dance.

Carl notes her costume. About her brow is bound a strand of flashing gems. Her body is bare, covered only by a pair of violet colored breast shields, richly embroidered with a bluebird design of beads; short satin tights, slashed at the sides, and also of violet hue. These are augmented by a string of pearls, hanging from her neck holding the breast shield in place. Yet there was nothing indelicate about this scanty costume. Carl recalled that he had seen many in France that were shocking when compared to this. Here was beauty and harmony. It was not the costume but the girl whose beauties it revealed that made it a wonderful picture.

There were dangerous curves ahead, Carl mused, for those of the men in the audience who were so inclined. The women, he felt sure, would appear to be unaware of her beauties, but would, nevertheless, make comparisons in their own minds.

To Carl, however, no sensual thoughts occurred. To him the girl was an object of art. With a connoisseur's eye for beauty he studied her from head to foot. Her height he judged to be about five feet five inches; her figure that of Venus de Medici. Having a good memory for figures he recalled that the

dimensions of that statute were, bust and hips, 36 and 38 inches respectively; waist, 26 inches. The dancer's back was long and slender, almost flat near the shoulders, but deeply curved at the waist. Her limbs were well rounded, soft and large at the hips, tapering down very gently toward small dimpled knees. From there they gracefully swelled to her calves and in exquisite proportion diminished gently to her finely rounded ankles and slender feet. Her smooth arms were softly molded from shoulder to wrist, with dimpled elbows like a baby's. The small wrists with long slender hands and fingers were those of an aristocrat. Her entire body, he noted, scarcely revealed the existence of bone—in fact there were no sharp, thin or angular points to be seen. Indeed a veritable Venus!

Her soft skin, of fine texture, was uniformly tanned over her entire body, as if she were wont to take regular sun baths in Eve's costume. Powder and rouge were conspicuous by their absence, her complexion being naturally healthy and full of bloom. A beautiful symmetrical face, with a delicate lower jaw, a small, distinctly curved, cupid's bow mouth; a high finely arched brow added to the beauty of her sparkling eyes.

Hers was a gracefully molded head, somewhat high forehead, with a straight, clear cut, slender

nose, indicating intelligence. Her dark hair and silk-like skin showed her refinement of birth; her intelligent eyes, gray-blue, were lustrous and brilliant, full of fire, and in size well proportioned to her ruby-lipped mouth. When smiling, slightly pinkish teeth, semi-transparent, looking like two rows of pearls, enchanted the beholder.

Her upward curved oval shaped nostrils, and the small wrists and ankles, together with her entire bearing, betrayed that she was, or at least could be, a woman of extreme passion. She could be a vampire, Carl mused, a real one, if once her nature was aroused.

He could not tell whether desire had as yet been awakened in her. Young and vibrant, she appeared, off hand, as a rare desert flower, grown up undefiled and now blooming in full glory.

Then came reaction. Carl felt himself consumed by an overpowering desire for this girl. To make matters worse, the dancer when passing his table, gave him a glance that caused his bosom to heave and his eyes to shine with that light that clever women kindle in men.

To his mind came memories of the many girls he had met and known. None of them, he realized, would ever mean anything to him now. This desert dancer was his ideal. Yes, Grace, Fannie, Marion

and the rest were out of the question now. None of them could compare with this girl, either in physical or spiritual beauty. Dorinda was about the only girl whose figure could match that of this dancer.

But Carl was not alone in his studies of the girl. The others, too, are gazing intently at her. Not a movement of her lithe form escaped their eager eyes. Not a sound came from their lips, even their breathing seemed suppressed. It was as quiet as Mass at church.

Carl could scarcely restrain himself when the dancer came near him, whirling and gyrating her body. And the dance! Carl had never seen anything of its kind before. This was no shimmy of the city dance-hall, no "danse du ventre," but something wild and free. Wild and free, he reasoned, like the girl herself.

Their eyes met, and in her look Carl thought he read mutual understanding. The girl seemed to lose control of herself. Carl feared what would come next, when suddenly the music stopped its wail. The dancer stopped and bowing to the audience sought to return to her tent amidst the applause of the crowd.

Carl was all fire and flame as he pondered in his mind on how he could best become acquainted with her. One of his first thoughts was, "If she were only

With the connoisseur's eyes for beauty, he studied her from head to foot. Carl could hardly restrain himself, when the dancer came near him, whirling and gyrating her body.

on Broadway, instead of here in the wilderness, surrounded by date trees and sand, monkeys and lions."

He raised his glass to his lips, when he heard a slight uproar in the vicinity of the dancer's tent. Looking closely he saw that one of the visitors, more intoxicated by the liquor he had consumed than by the beauty of the dancer, was endeavoring to embrace and kiss her.

It was but a matter of a moment for Carl to reach the spot. Angrily he pulled the man aside. This started a fight. The annoyer attempted to pummel Carl, who proceeded to take all the fight out of him with a straight left to the jaw. With a thud the other hit the ground, but quickly recovered himself and sneaked shamefaced and properly chagrined from the place.

The hour was late and most of the people soon left the dancing place. The tourists disappeared, and the place became practically deserted save for a few natives.

The dancer came up close to Carl, and, much to his surprise, thanked him in excellent English. He mumbled something as to its "being all right"; but before he realized what he was saying he had asked whether he could speak to her a while.

After a moment's hesitation her consent was given. As he sat opposite the girl he studied her

face intently. Was he dreaming? Or did he really recall those eyes? A new feeling, far different from that which he experienced when she danced before him, came to Carl, supplanting that less worthy one.

The girl, seeing Carl's hesitancy to speak, began, "I feel as if I must tell you the whole story—that is, if you care to hear."

"Please do," returned Carl. During the dance he knew of many things he would like to say to her, but now—well he thought it best to let her do the talking.

"Well, to get to the point, the man you just drove away has long been an evil influence in my life. His name is de Rochelle. I worked for him as his secretary in Paris and New York. He forced his love upon me, through hypnotic influence. Later, he wanted to get rid of me, so, while he had me under his influence he commanded me to commit suicide by leaping from one of the bridges that span the East River, in New York."

"Commit suicide?" questioned the astounded Carl. "But why should he command that?"

"I found out, later, that he would have collected some fifty thousand dollars' insurance and would have returned to France to marry another girl."

"The beast," was all Carl could say.

The girl continued, "I would have carried out his orders but for an incident I have never forgotten.

As I was about to swing myself over the rail, a gentleman came up to hand me a handkerchief I had dropped in my excitement. He kept talking to me, not realizing, I suppose, my true intentions."

Carl, his mouth half-opened in astonishment and looking at her as if dazed, reached across the table to clasp her hand, when she said, "I believe it was you who saved my life."

Silently they gazed at each other, the tears coming to their eyes. The girl had difficulty to keep from crying aloud, while Carl, deeply moved, could find no word to relieve the situation. Words are helpless things at times and at best they fail to convey our true feelings. Volumes were spoken in silence by the look in their eyes and the pressure of Carl's hand.

The girl's hands trembled in his clasp, although he felt a slight pressure of them on his own. He drew one hand away to reach for a handkerchief so that she might dry her eyes. For a moment the gaze of the few people still present, caused him embarrassment. What he would have liked to have done was to take her in his arms, to console her and kiss the tears away.

Steeling herself against the emotion which was striving to get the better of her, Sana dried her eyes and attempted to smile. It was like the first sun-

beam that shoots from out the rifts of the departing storm clouds. It served to restore the equilibrium which had been so sorely disturbed by the emotional interlude.

It was difficult for them to continue the conversation on this subject, so they had some refreshments, talking the while of everything and nothing. It was the most natural thing for the conversation to drift back to New York, and drift there it did.

They spoke of many things of mutual interest. Carl told her of his work at home, of his books, and why he visited the Sahara. Still puzzled though as to why Sana should be here in the desert, he asked her the reason.

"That, too, is part of my story. But I shall begin at a point before I was born.

"As a youth, Baron von Seckt was the 'black sheep' of a family of the German nobility. He was what you Americans call a good sport, squandering his parents' money and contracting debts. Naturally he was much mixed up in social affairs and was the cause of many a family 'row.'

"At last his escapades became too much for his father, who decided that the son would have to go either to America or Africa. The young man selected the latter.

"He had money enough to last him perhaps a

year. He would enjoy himself while the money lasted—after that he could go to work. With this in mind he joined a hunting party. While in the region of the Niger River, near Ansozo, he became separated from his friends. He wandered around, lost and finally, totally exhausted, lay down to sleep. In his sleep he was attacked by a giant tiger snake. During the struggle which followed he was badly bitten by the snake. He managed, however, to kill it with his knife, and after freeing himself from its coils, fired several shots into its body to make sure it was dead.

"These shots attracted the attention of a hunter who at the time was not far away. He found the stricken man, by then unconscious and took him to his camp, where he was taken care of by the hunter's wife, a young and full-blooded gypsy.

"Blood poisoning set in and the Baron was confined to his bed for some time. During this time the gypsy nursed and cared for the sick man, probably with more ardor than was necessary. The result was obvious. One day, even before the Baron was quite recovered, the hunter discovered him and the woman in very compromising circumstances. He pulled his revolver to make an end to the unfaithful pair, but he was not quick enough. The

Baron rushed at him and in the struggle that followed the hunter accidentally killed himself.

"Shortly afterward the Baron married the gypsy, who as time passed gave birth to me, daughter of the Baron. That was at Temmimun, on the Gurara Oasis, where the couple had settled shortly prior to my birth. I am thus a 'child of love.'

"My father taught me German, French and English, while my mother taught me to play the violin, at which she was an adept. When I became sixteen my father took me to England to study, and probably to find a life companion. English life and its hypocrisy did not appeal to me, so shortly afterward I went to Paris, making my home with a family I had met in London. Then I learned that my father had suddenly died of heart failure and that I would be forced to make my own way through life.

"My knowledge of languages enabled me to secure work with an engineering concern, contemplating developments in the Sahara desert. This is the organization of which you spoke.

"Among the promoters of this concern was de Rochelle and soon he became one of my most ardent admirers. Although I was by no means in love with him, I often went to dinner or to the theater with him. One evening after dinner, which was served in a private dining room, he spoke to me of his

hypnotic powers. I had once read a book on the subject and was interested. In a joking way he offered to show me how it worked. Before I knew it, or could say a word in objection, I was under his influence. Months afterward I discovered that that night he had commanded me to love him and to marry him.

"From that night on it seemed that I took a great and unaccountable liking for the man. Previously I had merely endured him. Now I loved him and was his willing slave. Before long we were engaged to be married. At times, though, the feeling of repulsion returned, but under his influence this soon gave way, disappearing finally for good.

"De Rochelle's work was to raise the money for the Sahara Development Organization, and to that end he was sent to New York. He induced me to accompany him as his secretary. What followed is already known to you."

"What do you think of the scheme of flooding the Sahara?" Carl asked, fearing a further discussion of her troubles might renew her tears.

"I do not like it. I fear it."

"But why?"

"The plan is to make the desert fertile as it used to be in the days of the Roman Empire. It is a great engineering problem and can be done by build-

ing a canal from the sea to allow the waters to flow in. As a large part of the desert lies below sea level, the water would naturally flood a large area. As you know, the sun would evaporate a lot of this water to be returned to earth in the form of rain, which falling on the surrounding desert would soon make it a fertile land.

"But this undertaking, as I understand it, will not only change the climate of the Sahara but will affect that of the entire world. At a meeting of the promoters I heard it said that the result might be disastrous to the rest of the world. But like any nation or group of individuals seeking mere gain for themselves, the rest of the world is not likely to be taken into consideration.

"It would be a good thing for the world at large if the Sahara could be revegetated, but it must not be the cause of suffering. I would give anything a woman can righteously offer to the one who will prevent this destructive flooding. You see, it would destroy my beloved homestead at the Gurara Oasis."

"It can be done," remarked Carl, as he drew a pencil and a map from his pocket. He spread the map on the table between them and using his pencil as a pointer explained once more his mission in the desert, assuring her, at the same time, that he would

think of a plan by which the catastrophes she feared would be avoided.

Sana was overcome with joy. Rising from her chair, she clasped his hand with both hers, exclaimed, "I have, indeed, found a friend in you."

CHAPTER VII

THE LOVERS ON THE BEACH

AFTER a sleepless night, Carl arose early to take a stroll and enjoy his pipe.

He had tried to woo sleep in every known way, but in vain. In his mind's eye lurked the face of the girl he knew he loved better than anything on this earth, and through his brain whirled her promise to give anything a woman could offer to the man who could save her home from destruction.

Sana had told him, the night before, that every morning it was her custom to ride on horseback to the not far distant Lake Faguibi. So Carl inquired the way of the hotel keeper.

A few miles of brisk walking and he was at the lake. Looking around, and seeing no one, he sat down in a secluded spot, thinking of Sana and his plan to flood the Sahara.

Time passed and Sana not yet coming into vision, he took his binoculars from their case and adjusting them, swept the surrounding country with his gaze. Looking over the waters of the lake, he noticed, not

far from shore, a bather, enjoying a morning plunge. Focusing his glasses, he saw it was Sana, swimming, unhampered by even a bathing suit, in the blue-green water.

Not wishing to spy on her he put down his glasses, to while away the time with his pipe, until she should have finished with her swim and had resumed her attire.

After a time he again swung his glasses in the direction in which he had last seen her. She was no longer in the water. Leveling his binoculars on the shore, he scrutinized the scene closely. Ah! There she was. She was sitting on a stone behind some shrubbery, with only her legs to be seen below the foliage. She had evidently been out of the water for some time for he noticed that she was dressed.

As he watched he saw a large butterfly alight on her left knee, moving undisturbed toward the top of her stocking. Sana was perhaps putting a finishing touch to her hair, for her hands were not to be seen. At any rate the butterfly resumed his progress without fear.

That was all Carl could see and he studied the scene for a while as he would have meditated on a work of art. Surely the gods had given her beauty.

Putting his glasses aside, he fell into a reverie. Full well did he realize that Sana was a woman of

That was all Carl could see and he studied the scene for a while as he would have meditated on a work of art. Surely the gods had given her beauty.

exceptional beauty and passion, whose enchantments could enslave and humiliate the proudest and crush the mightiest. Was she aware of it? He did not know. But if she was, why did she bury herself here in the burning sands? She had a knowledge of love and life, and Carl was certain she was anything but lukewarm.

He gave her the benefit of the doubt, making up his mind at the same time that he would do his best to induce her to marry him and go to New York with him.

How his friends would envy him, especially after he had remained a bachelor for so long a time. During the long years many a woman had tried to weave about him the net of love. There had been a time when he was legitimate prey to all kinds of cheats and vamps, but his experiences with them had taught him the cold calculating ways of the "gold digger" and he had resolved never again to play "Santa Claus."

Carl, while having enjoyed life, became a man of reserve and had never been anxious to be led to the slaughter at the altar of matrimony. He did not want to be a husband on paper only. He also knew that man might come too late, but woman never. But he was not a foolish boy who wrote letters to a smart girl, who saved them with a definite object

in view. He knew, too, that passionate love is the source of little pleasure and of much suffering.

Would Sana leave the desert soil of her birth for his sake?

Passion he once called evil, but now planted in his heart it became virtue and joy. He and she would be well matched. Carl had found his ideal.

Observations covering many years had taught him that most men are fools so far as women are concerned and that women are the most dangerous playthings God ever devised. But, he reasoned, this was generally caused by man's own faults.

The favor Sana would win, as his wife, among his friends he pictured in the brightest colors.

It did occur to him that Sana, with feminine instinct, and so bewitching and beautiful a siren, could easily turn his vision of paradise into real hell, after she had brought him through a maelstrom of mad passion, which she would unquestionably arouse after having realized her full powers. "For woman, nothing is impossible" used to be a saying of his. But now, no such thoughts entered his head. He was too much in love!

This time he was sure of it. There had been times in his life when he had thought himself in love, but luckily he realized the true state of affairs before too late. How much sorrow and unhappiness could

be spared us mortals if we could but see what the future will bring.

Carl now thought of what had happened about a year before.

At that time he was sure he loved a girl, Dorinda, a young cloak model. He had taken lodgings temporarily in a rooming house in New York, and it so happened that Dorinda had the room over him. He had met her casually and they had taken a great liking for each other.

Dorinda was of the distinct flapper type, pretty to be sure, a good dresser, but a girl without much sense. Her one real ability, he now knew, was her art of weeping. You know the sort. The girl who crying bitterly relates her hard luck stories to arouse your sympathy and generosity. Resolved though he was against this very sort of thing, Carl like most men proved an easy, and perhaps willing, victim.

That she came home at all hours of the morning or entertained men in her rooms until late into the night did not trouble Carl. His faith told him it was all right.

Came an evening when he took her to dinner, as he had done quite regularly for some time. Dorinda leaning across the table said softly, tears in her voice, "Carl, I have wanted to talk to you of this for a long time. You know that I have taken

friends to my room in the evening. I should not have done it, but I did not know better. I was wrong, but I did no wrong," and taking his hand in hers, she pleaded, "Tell me that you believe me," and when he assured her of his belief, Dorinda pressed his hand, and with a trembling voice whispered, "Thank you, Carl. I feel much better."

She was relieved, but not Carl. He made her promise that she would not be so foolish in the future. And to all appearances she kept her promise.

Returning from a short business trip, however, Carl heard voices overhead until well into the morning. The following day he reminded Dorinda of her promise, but in a huff she left him without a word of explanation.

For some time they saw nothing of each other. But one evening she came to his door with an apology on her lips. And Carl, fool-like, accepted the apology. Immediately she launched into a recital of intimacy, concerning the trouble a supposed girl friend had gotten in. Carl listened quite attentively it is true, but while listening put two and two together.

But if it had not been for a few remarks between the girl and the landlady, overheard by him on his way to business, he never would have known the

truth. He realized then his narrow escape. Suppose he had asked her to marry him, as he had contemplated for so long a time?

Now, Sana had crossed his path. But Sana, he knew and rightly so, was not Dorinda.

He waited until she had stepped from behind the bushes that had hidden her while dressing, before he made his presence known.

"Good morning, Miss Sana."

"Oh, how do you do, Mr. Lohman. What brings you here—and so early?"

"Just taking a morning stroll to better enjoy my pipe," lying it is true, but he must not rush matters.

"It is rather a pleasant surprise to find you here at the beach. We are generally alone here."

"We?" Carl said in astonishment.

"Yes," she retorted, with a laugh, pointing to her handsome white Arab that stood champing at its bit a few yards away.

"Oh," relieved of a million and one doubts.

Sana made a move as if to go away, when Carl asked, "Are you in a hurry, or did I disturb you?"

"No, not at all."

"Come, let us sit here on the grass awhile and talk."

Carl, looking at her closely, "Do you know, I have been thinking quite a great deal of you since

last evening. In fact you caused me a sleepless night —although it was quite pleasant at that."

Sana looked straight into his beaming eyes. A smile played on her delicate lips.

"Is that possible, with all your American girls— your alluring New York flappers?"

"The New York girl? Oh, she is a cold proposition."

"But if I kept you awake, how much must all those American girls keep you awake? Do you ever get much sleep? You know, I heard that New York girls are quite capable of keeping men awake."

"But, my dear," interrupted Carl, "New York is not America; you cannot judge America by New York."

"Are you serious? Why, I thought New York was typical of what is American. Does not New York set the pace for the entire country, and does not the whole country fall in line, eager to do anything that is approved by New York?"

"Yes, to some extent."

"More than that. The other cities copy New York's buildings, her modes, her manners. Look at the flapper of Broadway and Fifth Avenue. Why all America is copying her, with her bobbed hair, short skirts, generously rolled down stockings, lip sticks, powder box and cigarettes."

"I admit that, but what of it?"

"The trouble is that too many of your women are just make believe, fata morganas. Your New York girl is an illusion—an artist and a painter. She carries her repair shop continually with her. Peep into her hand bag and you will find rouge, powder puff, lip stick, eye-brow pencil, nail file, chewing gum, matches and a key."

This Carl could not deny. He knew it was so, but, as if to himself, he continued the topic, with "The use of cosmetics is a necessity to most of our girls. They do not have the same complexion as have Swedish or German girls, for instance, and they must resort to the artificial. But it is interesting, and sometime quite amusing to observe how our girls apply the art of make-believe. Of course, all are not experts. One will often find that on a round face the rouge has been applied to the center of the cheek and the hair fluffed out at the sides. It would have been better to have rouged up and down the cheek bones with the hair drawn closely to the head. In that way, an appearance of slimness would have been obtained. On the other hand, one notices hollow cheeks without rouge and a closely drawn coiffeur. Had the hollows been rounded out with rouge and the hair fluffed out that face would have been really attractive.

"But as a rule, they know their little game. Some of them go to the extent of applying a touch of rouge against the inner bridge of the nose and on the ear lobes to give the effect of transparency.

"Take the girl with the so-called pug nose. She, as a rule, experiences great difficulty in making that nose fit in with the rest of her face. But it could easily be done. A straight narrow line of face powder along the nasal ridge, acting as sort of high light, would give prominence to the nose.

"The whole matter of make-up can be compared to an artist putting a finishing touch to a picture. If he knows his art a few deft touches of the brush creates harmony and beauty—if he doesn't—well, just another daub."

"Yes," Sana broke in, "but make-up is not the only kind of cleverness for which your American girls are admired. Take the matter of dress. Although you have girls with hair of all shades, black, brown, auburn, blonde—all seem to know what color of hat, dress, shoes and stockings to choose. The brunettes know how to pick yellow and orange and the blondes light blues."

"I have often noticed that, too. In that they are adept. Too much so, perhaps, when one realizes that a good many of them spend every cent they earn just to match the outfit. Much of it, to a thinking

person, is sheer waste. Some have a dress mania; they are the least part of themselves, they become manikins, of no greater value than their dresses.

"And the time they spend on their eye-brows and lashes to give better expression to their eyes! Ye Gods! Right in my own office at home it was so noticeable that I have been working on a plan to change the color of the eyes. You know, with some people, the color of the eye changes temporarily, due to internal feeling, and with this in mind I believe I can perfect a plan. Think of the time it would save you girls."

"Change the color of the eyes?" Sana was amazed. "Do you mean to say that, for instance, light blue or grayish eyes could be made deep blue?"

"Yes, I think so. I have experimented with other subjects and it worked. I am positive it can be applied to women's eyes—but it would be a slow process. Don't they change the color of cut flowers?"

Sana retorted, an impish look coming into her eyes, "Oh, I see. You want your fair subject to stand overnight with her feet in ink."

"Not quite that," laughing.

"But tell me, how it is that you, a man and an engineer are so interested in feminine matters? I suppose you change your sweetheart as often as you

do your tie, and that you have a large assortment of ties."

To which Carl made no response, so Sana, with a gay laugh, continued "Your note book must look like a harem directory."

Carl's retort "Nothing doing" was snappy and Sana hastened to sooth him with "Please do not misunderstand me. But I'm curious to know how it is you know so much about what women wear and use. Isn't it rather strange?"

"Oh, I don't know. To a large extent it has always been rather an impersonal proposition—sort of big brother like, you know. The girls would come to me with all sorts of questions regarding beauty, clothes, etc., and because I wanted to tell them my true viewpoint, it was natural that I should take an interest in them and their methods. To be frank I learned, too, that even the deposit from a lip stick does not taste so very bad."

Sana, glancing at Carl from the corner of her eyes, "I suppose you discovered that at a very early age."

"Yes, you are right. I came home from school one day with the imprint of a pair of cupid's bows on my cheek, much to the merriment of my sister. And those 'bows' weren't left there by a city girl,

either. She was a country lass, whose parents had sent her to school in New York."

"And from then on you were a lady's man?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. It's all a question of viewpoint. In fact it was just such misunderstanding that changed my career. I wanted to be an artist —a painter and sculptor. I had a great liking for that and a certain amount of talent. But my parents, misunderstanding my fondness for the feminine sex, talked me out of it. They were sure I would never succeed as an artist—my time, they said, would be more occupied with my models than with my brush. Perhaps they were right, one never can tell."

"But I believe you would have made a good artist."

"How do you know?" Carl smiled.

"Well, one can easily see that you are fond of beauty and harmony—as for the rest, well, I can tell."

"Really?"

"Yes. My father taught me character reading. Besides my mother showed me how to read the palm."

Carl stretched forth his hand to have her read the lines, but Sana changed the subject: "But we are drifting away from our topic—comparing the New York girl with others. Comparing them with girls

of other American cities they are found to be much alike. But when you compare her with a European girl—ah, then you see the difference."

"Such a comparison should be interesting. Let me have your candid opinion."

"First of all, take the French girl. She is a natural charmer with a lovely body. She knows how to attract male companions, gives them precisely what they desire and then applies her knowledge and ambition to controlling the male. That she does is well known. That is the Parisienne. France like all countries has a great variety of women. She has the country girl and the city girl, and if a comparison is to be made it must be between the country girl of France and the country lass of America, between the Parisienne and the New Yorker.

"Then consider the English, or rather the Anglo-Saxon women. Their beauty is marred by the largeness of the features. Their feet are also large. The English woman, as records show, is at the top in the average size of shoes. She is there with number seven and a half; American women, with number seven, come second; German, six and a half; France, six; Spain, five and a half, and South America with number five. As your country is made up of all nationalities, the majority of them are German, then the Irish and thirdly English, it is but logical that

the German element in your country caused the reduction—giving your women a number seven shoe as the average size. The limbs and features of English women are angular, rawboned so to speak. They are loose-fleshed and their dress—frightful. While there are, of course, quite a few exceptions, they, on the most part, cannot stand inspection.

"On the other hand, there is the German girl. People are apt to decry them by comparing the country girl of Germany with the city girl of other countries. I am sure that you, an American, will admit that you were most impressed with the musical voices of the women, their long silky hair and fine complexions. In those respects she cannot be compared with the women of any other country. The women as a rule are modest, orderly and home-loving. What she knows, she knows thoroughly, and she will not argue with you on a subject she does not understand. In some countries it is just the contrary. If she has the money and feels like dressing, she does not overdress. But as a rule the average German girl is not well dressed. That is where the American girl has the great advantage.

"The Spanish and Russian women have their own points of attraction. It has been said that the women of Spain have the loveliest arms and shoulders. I agree to that. It is also true of the refined

Russian woman. The average American girl has slim arms, fashioned much after those of her Anglo-Saxon sisters. Her shoulders, however, are more apt to be round and fleshy, whereas those of the Spanish and Russian women are flat. The Russian women, too, have the faculty of mastering languages, something that cannot be said of the average Anglo-Saxon.

"The Italian girl blooms and fades early. When in full bloom she is lovely, but the beauty seldom lasts.

"But to get back to your American girl. Regardless of what might be said to the contrary she is superior to all in many ways. She is well dressed, though at times underdressed. Either way, though, she spends a great deal of time and money on clothes.

"She paints, as you say, like an artist and as in no other place on the globe. Her coiffure is always neat and in fine trim. She is free to talk on things that interest her and in that respect cannot be compared with her hypocritical Anglo-Saxon sister. She is independent and knows how to help herself out of difficulties. She is a great charmer of men, but, as your divorce records show, she does not seem to know how to hold their affections.

"Of course, one cannot expect all the good quali-

ties in one set of women. As a rule, however, the American woman is superior to many.

"Take the American stage, for instance. No other country has so many beautiful girls on the stage. Of course, it is true that they are selected from all over the country and are of different nationalities, but they are essentially American.

"All in all, the American woman is to be admired. Her style, grace and freedom of movement cannot be found elsewhere. There is no doubt but what most of her good examples are to be found in New York. The most attractive ones seem to concentrate in New York.

"But the trouble is that contact with men makes the American woman more or less mercenary. That, of course, is the man's fault. You American men are too apt to think of life as a mere matter of dollars and cents, and it is only natural that your women, hearing that doctrine preached from early morning to late at night, should in turn become of the same mind."

Carl had no intention of arguing. He realized that Sana had overlooked certain phases of American life—he saw, too, that she did not speak of the American woman as being high-strung, stubborn and cranky at times, and that a great many of them never know what they want.

His words, therefore, did not betray his thoughts. "Yes, I believe you are right. I admire your knowledge. But, please do not compare New York with our other cities. New York is not America, and never will be."

"But what, then, is America? In Chicago, Cleveland, Denver or any large American city you are told that these respective cities do not represent the life and customs of the United States. Where, then, will you find the true American?"

Carl shrugged his shoulders, replying, "You can search me. But America cannot be judged by the individual or by any group of individuals. America is the melting pot of the world. All nations, all creeds enter into the life of America. The nation can only be judged as a nation. The national spirit is the thing."

"Even to the point of hypocrisy?"

"What do you mean?"

"Your dry laws, for instance—what a farce!"

"You have got me there. On that point I cannot argue. It is true that hypocrisy enters there. And hypocrisy is the worst enemy a nation can have within its borders. In the long run it leads to the destruction of a nation as a great nation. Incalculable good would be rendered a people if they could

only be made to understand and realize the dangers of hypocrisy."

"But what do you, as an American, think of the dry laws?"

"I can only speak from a nonpartisan point of view. I have never indulged to a great extent, so the law had no personal effect on me. Theoretically the country is as dry as the desert sands—practically speaking it is as wet as it ever was. However, to get a drink one must either go to another country or be a law breaker in his own country. It is quite obvious that all desiring a drink cannot travel to a foreign land, so the law is broken.

"Of course, those who can afford to do so, go to Cuba or Europe, and there, like your camels of the desert, they fill themselves with the wine and beer of Germany, the cognac and champagne of France, the brandies and whiskies of England, to tide them over the return."

"Oh, dear, you are joking. It is really not as bad as that, is it? But you know, when I was in New York, I was given several recipes for the making of home brews and wines. Seems as if the art of brewing is becoming one of the greatest American accomplishments. I brought the recipes home with me," laughing lightly. "Some day the Sahara may get really dry and then I could make use of the formu-

las. Of course, I suppose I could, like your truly patriotic Americans, indulge in water only. I used to think that water was for ablution only, but it seems that you Americans have discovered another use for it."

"Yes, and the ones who fostered the idea should get an iron cross pinned on them, or, they should at least receive the Nobel Prize as a reward for taking away the personal liberties of a people and making a crowd of hypocritical law breakers of them. The part that hurts is that the people had no say in the matter, whether they liked it or not. Yet the people are the builders of the nation—the ones who have contributed to its greatness."

"Speaking of the contributions to a nation, what struck me most forcibly in your country was the uniformity and monotony in every city and town I visited. That is, with a rare exception."

"Oh, then, you admit there was an exception. Where was it?"

"My friend Mr. O'Brien had to make a business trip to Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, so he took his wife and myself with him in his car. We passed through a number of New Jersey and Pennsylvania cities and towns, and in the evening he took us to a great county fair in Allentown, a city adjoining Bethlehem. It was there that I found the exception

to the rule so far as American cities are concerned. Allentown certainly was different.

"Never before had I seen streets so well and so uniformly lighted—even very much better than your own Fifth Avenue in New York. Even Europe can boast of nothing of the like. There was a touch of the artist that appealed very much to me, and I believe to all visitors to that town. That is, the lamp posts have, near the lamp, large bowls that are always kept filled with differently colored flowers and trailing vines in summer, and evergreens, I understand, in winter.

"In the middle of the public square was a great granite monument, erected in honor of the Soldiers and Sailors of Allentown. What impressed me most was the lighting effect used to show the monument at night. Nothing garish, like the Coney Island effect, so many times seen in America, but the whole was bathed in a soft glow that was extremely effective and peaceful.

"We liked Allentown so much that we remained overnight, and before leaving the following day, took time to look around. To our surprise we found the sidewalks and streets extremely clean, which is the exception, as you know, for an industrial city of some hundred thousand population.

But everything was different, even the people seemed different and more friendly."

"Yes, I know it," was Carl's dry answer.

"But as I said, it was an exception. Otherwise I found all over the same streets, the same railway stations, the same houses, the same stores, and the same people in the same dress. They asked me the same questions, using the same diction and the same expression, in the same mechanical voice, accompanied by the same sort of smile. Nothing individual or original. Do all Americans think the same, act the same?"

"Not by any means. You barely scratched the surface. You did not see what was underneath."

"Perhaps not, but to me it seemed that everything, animate and inanimate, bore the same mark of standard uniformity imprinted on all with rubber stamps cast from the same die. Why, in every city I visited one could see on the sidewalks, floors of public buildings, even in churches, the same round marks of cast-away chewing gum. And in every city it stuck to my shoes in the same way."

She paused awhile, but Carl was too deep in thought for words, so Sana continued:

"Yet, there is no other country on the face of the earth that could be made so interesting in every walk of life as your own, for, as you say, it is made up of

people from all lands—they have given it the greatness it possesses. But what is so contradictory of the general state of life is the unique way in which all the people seem to seek notoriety—the underdressed women of the street and ballroom—the sensational divorces and murders—the demands of the blackmailers and the numerous clever ways in which unassuming persons are cheated out of their hard earned dollars by fraudulent schemers and consummate rogues. Seemingly, this condition appears to be a paradox, and so it would be if entirely separated from the general plan of life, but it is inextricably interwoven in the cosmic scheme—the whole. Because someone has been successful in a certain line, oblivious of its virtue or its evil, others will pursue the same path in quest of wealth equal to their brother. Yet considering all, I greatly admire your country. It holds a spell of fascination for me, although I cannot define it."

"It is indefinable," replied Carl, gazing far in the distance.

Carl, although one could not say he was unattentive to Sana in her discourse, was thinking of things other than the subject of her remarks. Turning to the girl, he asked, "Where did you learn the fascinating dance you performed last night?"

"Oh that? Just a few steps which de Rochelle

taught me while I was under hypnotic influence. A friend of mine, Count von Sarnoff, called it the 'Vampire Dance,' after he had seen it."

"Von Sarnoff? A Russian?"

"Why, yes. A young Russian fellow—sporty to an extreme I discovered, and deadly in love with me."

"Hmm. How did you get along with him? The temperatures and temperaments of Russia and the Sahara are two very different things and hardly to be reconciled."

"That is just what made it so fascinating—for a time. Love speaks an international language, you know," she smiled.

"Indeed? Quite interesting"—coldly, then changing his manner quickly, "But it would be most charming to hear your story of the 'Vampire Dance'."

"If you promise not to say nasty things, or get angry at what I tell you, I shall tell you all about it."

Carl was but too anxious to learn anything and everything relating to Sana, not to yield compliance to this mild request. Her musical voice, her manner and ways had already worked their charm. He was even more in love than he imagined.

"Please tell me. I promise to be good."

"Bear that in mind, then. It is not to everyone I tell such things as this.

"After de Rochelle had disappeared I returned to Europe where in Paris I met the Princess Cassandra, a Russian. I traveled with her, as companion, over Europe, visiting the various resorts and cities. At Monte Carlo, while we were trying to lose our money, I suppose, at one of the roulette tables, the Princess recognized her nephew, von Sarnoff, who had been winning steadily. He came over to our table and after the usual introductions, played for me. He seemed to have lots of luck and I won more money than I had ever seen before. Then we went to Baden-Baden, where de Rochelle put in an appearance. I had him arrested while he was fighting a duel because of me, and then I returned to my desert home."

"But I thought you were going to tell me the story of the dance. How did you learn it?"

"The dance itself was an exotic movement that had its birth in the mind of de Rochelle, who taught it to me when I was in a trance. But he has passed from my mind—he proved himself to be nothing but an impostor—that is all."

"But the dance you did last night would have been impossible while wearing the long dresses and clothes of civilization."

Sana looked at Carl with pleading eyes, "Why

do you say that? The whole thing is distasteful to me now when I think of it."

Anxious though he was to hear the whole story, Carl did not wish to force it from the girl, so kept silent, looking out over the desert sands.

Sana, however, read his thoughts. Patting his hand ever so lightly she resumed, "We are friends. I can tell it to you. I know you will understand. Perhaps it is for the best. Who knows?"

Carl, letting his gaze rest on her face, objected with, "No—if it hurts you to tell it, I would rather you would not."

"But I promised I would. I shall keep my promise. Only, please, please, do not think ill of me. That would hurt more than the story."

Before Carl could give voice to his thoughts, Sana continued:

"As I said the dance was taught me while under hypnotic influence. Upon coming out of the trance I found that I had partly disrobed myself. I did not realize it then, but I knew later that de Rochelle was using me as a plaything. Not that he ever harmed me. No. He always respected me.

"However, I would not advise any woman to subject herself to hypnotic influence, even if the man be her lawful husband, as I believed de Rochelle would

some day be to me. It is wrong, very wrong. The victim does just as the hypnotist wishes—tells him everything—lets him analyze every feeling or passion. Just how far he went with me I shall never know, but I have shed many a bitter tear thinking of the state I found myself in when coming out of a trance."

"Poor girl. I wish I had that devil here."

"Please God, I shall never see him again. But I have learned my lesson. A lesson I shall never forget."

"Tell me about the dance. Forget him, and tell me that. You know I have never seen anything like it. Was it not improved upon by you? I'm sure it was."

"Yes, it was. You know my blood—gypsy blood—wild and free. After having been taught the first few steps the rest was easy. It was quite natural that my gypsy blood should come to the fore when I dance.

"It was at Baden-Baden that I first danced in public. I was at a private entertainment given by the young von Sarnoff. All of us had been drinking more or less, and most of us were, as you Americans would say, 'a little tipsy.' We were there to enjoy ourselves and gave little heed or thought to the morrow.

"Had I been sober I should never have let myself be persuaded by flattering words and praise. But the wine had gone to my head and I was easily led. Von Sarnoff had been making a fool of himself generally, drinking champagne from my slipper and making ardent love to me. Then he asked me to dance for them. There had been several quite risque performances that evening and in my madness I knew I could outdo them all. So I got on the table, threw aside my remaining slipper and danced for them. Without realizing it, I dropped my outer garment while dancing. At the end of the dance I found myself standing there in my little pink combination suit.

"Von Sarnoff refused to return my gown, but I managed to wrap myself in a table cover. It was von Sarnoff who christened me the 'virtuous vampire dancer.' Just how much vamping I do in my dance I never know. No doubt you and the other watchers last night could tell it better than I. But the name lingered in my mind, and so I have named it the 'Dance of the Vampire'."

Carl, eager-eyed, "Really I must confess I did not pay much attention to the dance. My eyes were on the dancer. Suppose you show it to me now."

"No, not now. Some other time. Perhaps after you return once more to our great desert."

"Then I suppose I shall have to wait. But tell me, dear, why did you come to this out of the way corner of the earth after spending so much of your time in the great cities and resorts of the world?"

"Oh, I soon tired of that false life. So I decided to join my mother, who, after my father's death had moved here from the Gurara Oasis. This used to be her old home, you see. Here at least I can live a natural life, free from what you call civilization. Of course, even here one must make a living, so that is why I dance. They look at such things differently here. A woman can be a dancer and still be considered good, but in Europe—well you know. Besides it is great fun to be able to ride around free as the air, in native dress, although sometimes I masquerade in European style."

"Sana, I admire the frankness with which you have related your experiences to me. I am glad, for your sake, that you have returned here. I hope, too, that you believe me when I say I know none of those happenings were brought about through fault of yours."

"I do believe you."

"As for your dance," resumed Carl, "it is worthy of all the praise bestowed upon it, and I . . . "

"Oh, your American girls are equally as good dancers. I learned, too, that they were very clever

in ridding themselves of their stays when at dances. 'Parking them,' I believe they call it. Of course, we of the desert do not wear such things at all. We have our own mode of costume and dress."

For a moment she hesitated and then continued, "I have often wondered why in America, such a large good-natured country, full of foreign elements, the very forefathers of the country did not do something to maintain their national costumes in the mode of dress. How much more interesting it would be to see the dress of the American Indian, the true American, and that of the earlier settlers, instead of every one trying to pattern their clothes after the so-called latest European fashions?

"How much more interesting and picturesque it would be to see Turks, Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Greeks and Swedes in their national costumes, instead of appearing as if all are of a single mind.

"Many of your people travel through foreign lands to study foreign ways, while, in fact, you have everything in your own country, so far as peoples and their customs are concerned. Why deny it?

"I noticed too that you have but one official language. Perhaps it is best, but then take the case of Switzerland, much smaller in population than the city of New York. There they have three official languages and get along wonderfully. Everyone

has the opportunity of learning three languages, which is a great thing to be sure. German, French and Italian are not called foreign or alien tongues in Switzerland. The very word 'foreign' specifies the limits of one's knowledge."

All this while Carl had been thinking of just one thing. That was to secure Sana for himself. Sana, he was sure, brought up under the strict discipline of her father and with her broad views of life, would be a safer wife to him than the cold blooded, calculating New York propositions, as he called them, most of whom do not know what they want, and flit from man to man as occasion demands.

To suit his purpose, he changed the conversation, taking her hand into his. To his delight she made no attempt to prevent his doing so.

"Do you intend staying here in this wilderness?"

"Yes, for some little time. Sooner or later. mother and I shall return to the Gurara Oasis, where I was born."

"You mean you will never leave the desert?" Carl asked anxiously.

"No, not that I know of. I do not care for European life."

"Well, then, how about America, New York?"

"I confess I do like New York, with its shops, and

plays and excitement. Oh, yes, I like those funny little places in Greenwich Village, I believe you call it."

"Oh, that 'nut section.' They are rather unconventional there. Who took you there?"

"My friend, Mrs. O'Brien, myself and two men friends of hers visited it one night, strolling from place to place. We had dinner and danced at the 'Greenwich Village Inn' and went also to the 'Black Cat' and the 'Pirates' Den'—the pirates there were rather tame, though."

"Wouldn't you like to return to America, to New York, to the Village, in company of a great admirer of yours?"

"I do not know who that could be," turning her head away from him.

"Assume that he would be sitting at present at your side, holding your hand."

Sana tried to withdraw her hand at this, but Carl held it the tighter. He leaned toward her, taking the other hand too, and whispered softly, "Sana, dear, look at me. Ever since I met you on the bridge that afternoon you have filled my dreams. I despaired of ever seeing you again, and life did not seem worth the living. When I saw you again last night it was in a dream. Thoughts of you kept me awake all night. Will you return to America as my

wife? You know I love you and love you dearly. And I think you care for me too."

The girl was a little uneasy, as if at a loss to know what to do or say. Her gaze ranged the distant horizon as she slowly replied, "You may be right with regard to the last—I cannot say. But I will admit I couldn't sleep last night myself. That we should meet here I do not understand."

"Sana, dear, answer my question," pleaded Carl, trying to draw her to him gently.

The question was never answered, for, with a sudden jerk Sana freed one hand and slapped herself on the neck. A bee, stunned by the blow, fell into her lap.

Sana made a grimace and touching carefully the spot where the bee had left its sting, remarked, "I believe it is swelling."

Carl now took matters into his own hands. Drawing her gently to him, her shoulder against his bosom, he studied the red mark, saying, "I don't think it is poisonous, but it certainly is swelling."

With Sana's body quivering in his arms he pressed the spot tenderly with his fingers. A sudden thought shot through his mind and he added softly, "Let me take out the poison." Without waiting for response he bent over her, pressing his lips upon her neck to suck out the poison.

The warmth of her velvet-like flesh made his head swim to the music of the gods.

Sana was blushing a brilliant red, like a poppy, Carl thought, and she tried to get free. He held her all the closer now; his hand inadvertently upon her breast which was, he felt, beginning to move stormily. Her resistance did not last long. Soon she lay quite still, her shoulder against his bosom. His bosom, too, was heaving mightily as he pressed his lips tightly against her neck, while Sana slightly parted her quivering lips, breathing heavily and slowly, her body exhaling a sweet fragrance like the aroma of a sun-kissed rose.

Carl knew it as that of an untouched blossoming flower and he was happy! Her heart, under his hand, told him too, of her feelings, and lifting his lips slightly, he murmured, "Sana, I love you. Be mine," and his cheek brushed against her warm neck.

His passionate kisses upon her neck startled Sana for a moment. She became conscious of his hand upon her rising breast, but in her ecstasies of bliss, she did not resist.

Her long drawn breaths became more passionate; her limbs were rigid with fire. Finally, stretching her body slowly, she turned around in his arms. Her loving eyes which had changed from their grayish blue to pure blue, were shining with fire, as she

looked at Carl, who holding her before him, whispered, "Honey, dearest, be mine."

In answer to his plea, she crept closer to him and threw her bare arms around his neck and drew him gently closer. But Carl clasping her body feverishly in his arms, held her, looking steadily into her starry bright eyes, as if dissecting the passion raging in her body, and he drank the breath of her sighing emotion. With a soft "my desert star," his lips covered her quivering mouth. In a passion of fire, clasping their arms still tighter, they experienced that moment of ecstatic bliss when passing time leaves no trace. Heart to heart, lips to lips, they lay there, tight in each other's arms, in an ecstasy of happiness.

In his glory, Carl could think of nothing more sensible to say that "That little bee surely left sweet honey upon your neck."

"As sweet as me?" she asked mischievously.

Bending over and kissing her neck once more, he answered, "Sweeter than sugar, but only half as sweet as you." With that he showered her neck and shoulders with kisses.

Forgotten in a moment was the past with its many trials, unthought of was the future—the present alone existed for the two so closely clasped in love's embrace. Those moments of rapture were like pre-

meditated bits of eternity. The world and all its vain dreams could not give the supreme madness of joy which they experienced in silence and solitude. The kisses they drank from each other's lips were sweeter than the honey of Hymettus. Their corporal beings seemed to vanish and dissolve away, while their souls merged into one whose aspirations were boundless, whose thoughts knew not words and whose pleasures were not of this earth.

. . . . . .

The sun was high in the heavens when Sana at last released herself from Carl's arms.

"Come, Carl dear. We must be going. I shouldn't wonder but what mother is already very anxious for me."

Arm in arm they sauntered homeward, along the quiet shore of the Niger—that river of history, Sana's horse following behind them, puzzled, no doubt, over the strange being who came and caused his mistress to neglect him so.

They had strolled but a short distance, when they heard a woman's cry. Their soaring flights of fancy were brought quickly to earth by the almost unearthly yells and shrieks.

Looking around they perceived a negro girl chasing a large monkey that was running away with her

clothing. It had chosen an opportune moment for its mischief while the dark damsel was enjoying a swim.

Carl and Sana hurried toward the scene of the chase, but as they neared the spot, they saw the monkey suddenly turn and attack the girl. Flashes of livid flame sparkled maliciously in its small beady eyes, as it made the fatal spring. It was about to rend the throat of its victim, when it observed Carl coming toward it, revolver in hand. Crazed now with fear, the animal leaped from the prostrate negress and lunged at Carl, its new enemy. A well directed shot, and it was over. The hairy thing fell dead at Carl's feet, while the negress, recovering from her fear, and embarrassed at the presence of the man, got up quickly and without so much as stooping to pick up her clothing, rushed away into the water, resembling nothing so much as an animated puppet of ebony.

Sana's mother, a gypsy not of the type Carl had often seen traveling through America, was waiting at the door of her modest home. She greeted Carl in friendly fashion when introduced by Sana. She had heard of him, she said, and thanked him profusely for the aid he had given her daughter.

She was quite surprised when Carl asked her for Sana's hand in marriage. That would be up to Sana

entirely, she told him, and if Sana was satisfied she would be satisfied also.

Upon hearing this, Sana threw herself into Carl's arms exclaiming that that had already been settled.

Much to Carl's delighted surprise he found that his future mother-in-law was a woman of distinct culture and refinement, something he had not expected to see in a gypsy. Together they spoke for quite a time, discussing many things of mutual interest.

The talk reverted to Sana's father, of whom the mother had only words of praise. Apparently he had tried hard in the last years of his life to make up for the foolishness of his youth. Excusing herself, Sana's mother left the room, returning shortly with a manuscript in pencil. Handing it to Carl, she explained, "My husband wrote this just before his death. He was a great student of astronomy and this data he compiled as the basis for a book, but he died before he could have it published."

Noting that Carl perused the manuscript with great interest she continued, "You may have it, if you wish. I understand you are a writer and it may be of inspiration to you. Take it and use it. Perhaps he who wrote it will sometime know that his work did amount to something."

Urged by Sana, Carl readily accepted the data,

thanking the mother, and promising to read it carefully during his travels across the desert. He was sure, he said, that it would prove of great help and value to him some time.

Carl was about to take his leave to return to the hotel, when Sana, recalling something to mind, said, "Mother, read Carl's hand, please."

This the gypsy consented to do, motioning to Sana to go out doors, as they would have to be alone.

"Shall I cross your palm with silver?" Carl laughed.

"No, that is necessary only with professionals."

Taking Carl's hand in hers, she studied the lines carefully, and in an earnest tone, began, "I see danger—great trouble for you—very soon—you are going to lose your best friend. Yes. Some man is going to take that friend away from you!"

She paused for a while, then seriously, "You are going to have a serious accident, but you will recover. I also see another dark girl coming into your life, whom you should not trust. You are going to take a long journey across the water, and that girl will be with you."

Carl, thinking the girl to be Sana, interrupted with "What will become of her?"

"You will cast her away after you have crossed

the water and you will have a great deal of worry over the other girl, whom you really love."

Carl did not know what was what, nor who was who, and asked for a description of both girls, to which the gypsy replied, "Both are dark haired and beautiful. The one means well, the other does not."

Carl, desirous to learn as much as he could, asked to be told the final outcome, but the only answer he got was, "That, one cannot say. But everything will turn out as you want it to be."

This in a measure satisfied Carl. He knew how he wanted things to turn out. At any rate he was of too practical turn of mind to give much weight to a palm-reading.

Taking leave of the mother he joined Sana outdoors. They chatted a while, making plans for a trip on horseback the following day.

After Carl had gone, Sana was told by her mother that she was sorry that she had read Carl's future and warned Sana of the danger ahead. While Sana believed devoutly in her mother, she dismissed the fear that harm might come to herself, but she was worried in regard to Carl.

Upon learning of the proposed excursion into the desert the following day, her mother tried to persuade Sana not to go, but the girl only answered,

"If it is predicted that certain things will happen, they will happen; all one can do is to await the time and take it good naturedly."

Arguments were useless, for Sana simply said, "Your reading of the future would not be of any value if the happenings you predict could be prevented in time," adding, with a little smile, "You don't want to be considered a faker, do you dear?"

To which there was no answer.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE CLUTCHES OF AN AMOROUS CAVE MAN

SANA in breeches and short riding jacket, stood at the side of her restless steed when Carl arrived on horseback. It was an ideal day for an outing and spiritedly they trotted off to the desert.

Sana was radiantly happy at the prospect of enjoying the freedom of the desert with her lover. Too soon, far too soon, he would have to leave her and she was glad to have him alone for the day.

Her horse, the white Arab, was an exceptionally fine but nervous beast. Carl's mount was a tame mare in comparison and Sana teased him, saying, "I bet that you cannot catch up with me."

"All right. I'll bet you a kiss," Carl retorted.

"But if I win?"

"It will suit me."

"But if I lose?"

"That will suit me also."

"I must say, you are some sport, Carl. Don't you want to hold the stakes too, so that you will surely be on the safe side?"

With that she chuckled to her horse and it leaped ahead with wide swinging strides, leaving Carl to follow suit. Try as he would, it was a useless task. He had to content himself with the dust clouds from the flying heels of the Arab, as it carried Sana far ahead over the burning sands.

A few miles of this and Sana slowed up a bit, so that Carl might catch up with her. With a smile she reminded him of his lost wager, which Carl promptly paid her with interest.

Proceeding again, they moved swiftly northward over the level plain. Here and there they came upon an isolated group of palm trees and small bushes, partly burned up by the hot rays of the desert sun. Otherwise, there was nothing but sand before them and a clear cloudless sky overhead. But the sand and the heat mattered not to the lovers, as riding side by side, they paved the road of their future with bricks of shining gold!

At last it was time for them to turn back. Sana knew of a shorter route home and suggested that they take it.

They trotted along for several hours, when Carl saw a dwelling in the distance. As they drew nearer

Enjoying the freedom of the great desert, they paved the road of their future with bricks of shining gold.

they heard strains of music and Sana suggested going in and asking for refreshments.

At the gate a Berber woman asked them what they wanted. Sana told her, whereupon she led them into a dimly lighted room. They found places on the floor, apart from a group that sat near a small platform, at the side of which lounged a fierce looking fellow, playing a strange musical instrument.

Wine and cakes being served, they paused to watch a dancer who had stepped on the platform. The dancer, a girl of hardly sixteen, was very scantily clad and her dance consisted mainly of twistings of the body, accompanied with meaningful flashes of the eyes. At first she seemed rather timid, but at the shout "Cintani, put some life in it," she distorted her body until there was no doubt as to the meaning of the emotions she was endeavoring to express—much to the delight of the Arabs in the room.

The one whose command she had so eagerly obeyed was, as Sana whispered to Carl, Amshied, a Berber chieftain, and the three husky females at his side were known to be his consorts.

After the dancer had gone, the musician placed a snake on the platform. He then commenced to charm it with the whistling of a fife, to which the snake responded readily, much to the surprise of Carl, who, not believing it would be noticed in the

darkness, took Sana's hand and pressing it to his lips, said, "That is more than a man can do to a woman."

His act, however, was noticed by Amshied, who turning to his women said, in a low voice, "Watch that pair. One of them is a woman. If I am right, I know who she is and who wants her. At any rate they shall not leave. I'll take care of the woman, and you three can share the man."

Saying this, he arose from the floor and went into another room, where he knew de Rochelle was waiting. Motioning de Rochelle to the door, he nodded at Sana, asking, "Is that the one you spoke of this morning?"

"Yes. Can you manage to secure her?"

"Have I not managed many things? It shall be done. But first the gold."

De Rochelle paid him his price and sat down to wait, believing that at last Sana was in his hands. Little knew he, however, of the plans lurking in Amshied's skull.

When Amshied returned to his place, he spoke a few curt words to the women, who now stepped to the platform and performed amazing feats of strength, revealing the while their muscular limbs and bodies.

Sana was astounded and turned to Carl, saying, "They are regular amazons—desert amazons."

This exhibition finished, Carl looked at his watch and seeing that it was quite late, helped Sana up from the floor and prepared to leave.

Seeing this, Amshied stepped forward, as if to escort them to the door.

Stepping on a small carpet, Sana and Carl felt the floor beneath them give way. Carl made a vain effort to throw Sana to safety, but failed when Amshied gave him a shove that sent man and woman headlong into the pit beneath. Their fall was broken by a heap of rugs beneath the trap, so that neither suffered any physical harm. The room in which they found themselves was in total darkness. Besides, it was filled with a suffocating smoke that crept into their lungs, burning and stifling them. In vain they sought means of escape, falling at last insensible to the ground.

Some minutes later, or so it seemed to him, Carl, who, although he had recovered his senses was unable to move, owing to the effects of the drugged smoke he had inhaled, saw a small door open, through which entered Amshied and the three women. The chieftain tossed Sana, who was still unconscious, over his shoulder, as if she were a mere

bundle of rugs and carried her off, whither Carl knew not.

As for himself, he was left to the mercies of the three amazons. Chatting gaily among themselves, in a language unknown to Carl, they carried him upstairs to a small room. Here they threw him upon a rough couch like bed, fastening his legs and arms with shackles attached to the four legs.

Helpless, he lay there, thinking of what would happen to his beloved. What fate was in store for her? Desperately he struggled to free himself from his chains, but it was useless. He was as helpless as a pig trussed for the butcher's knife.

To his disgust, his own position was brought clearly home to him, when the three women commenced pawing over his body, in the same way as one would examine an animal on the auction block. Resist he could not; he was forced to submit to their intimate inspection, which, he thanked his stars, did not last long. Satisfied as to his physical make-up, the women suddenly assumed various poses about his couch, vying with each other for Carl's attention. Carl, however, rolled his head from side to side, closing his eyes to convey to them as clearly as he could his desire to have nothing to do with them.

Determined they were, however, to show their

charms to their captive. One by one they came over to his corner, each trying harder than the other to arouse in him some indication of desire. Carl managed to keep his eyes tightly closed for a time, but his thoughts were too bewildered, his mind too much filled with Sana, to allow him to do so long. Opening his eyes, he saw one of the women still moving around before him. With a rage caused by disgust, Carl gave vent to a string of oaths. These had the desired effect. Perhaps the woman did not understand their meaning, but the meaning of his voice was clear. At any rate she decided not to make him any angrier and left through a small side door and bolted it.

He lay gazing around the room as best he could. Did that drapery in the far corner move? He watched closely. Yes, it was moving. What now? It was pushed aside, and through a small opening crept a figure. A woman, he perceived, but who? Coming into the light he recognized the dancer whom the Berber had called Cintani. Was he to go through another ordeal of the kind he had just been subjected to?

Maddened by his helplessness, he was about to scream out a curse, when the girl whispered, in poor French, "Keep quiet—I will help you."

Tip-toe she crept towards him. To his relief,

Carl saw that she had other intentions than to charm him. From her girdle he saw her take a key. With quick fingers the shackles were unlocked and Carl set up, free!

He could but look his thanks—he had no time for words, for again, with cautioning finger the slave-girl whispered, "The girl—the one you came with, come!"

Taking Carl's arms she led him across the room, stopping before a great rug, suspended curtain-wise from the ceiling.

"In there," she whispered, and was gone.

Carefully Carl moved the rug aside. It concealed a heavy wooden door. And on the other side!

Peering through a small hole in the door Carl saw Sana lying on a heap of cushions, while Amshied, back to Carl, knelt beside her, caressing and fondling her. Sana was still happily insensible to her predicament.

With an effort, Carl suppressed a cry. He felt for his revolver. He recalled, then, that the women had taken it away from him. He looked about the room. Not a thing that would serve as a weapon was to be had.

He tried the door. To his relief it was unlocked. Slowly he slid it open. A low growl, coming from somewhere at his side made him jump back in alarm.

No, there was nothing in the room with him. Again a growl, accompanied with the sniffing of an animal. Desperate, Carl pulled the rug aside. To his horror he saw an iron-barred door, behind which, stretched full length on the floor, lay a huge Nubian lion—the black lion of the deserts—the king of the lion tribe. Should the lion roar or spring at the door, Carl realized with a flash, all was lost. Amshied would be aroused from his sensual desires, and all hope of rescue would disappear. To his amazement, the lion merely yawned and blinked his eyes. Often had he seen just such a scared human at the other side of his door. No need of hurrying, no need of wasting breath. Sooner or later the feast would be his!

The two doors were connected at the top by an iron rod, so fixed that when either door was slid open the other opened also. Carl saw at a glance that he could slide the one door and get into the other room before the lion had time to get out, for as soon as he was through he could close the door against the lion. But, he reasoned, suppose the lion did manage to squeeze through while he was getting into the other room. Then if there was no other available exit out of the other room, things would be worse than before. He would be trapped.

What could he do? Once more his gaze roamed about the room. His eyes rested on the couch.

Yes, that might answer. His fears for Sana gave him speed. It was but the work of a moment to get that couch and prop it upright against the door of the den. Fortunately for Carl the workmanship of the door was none too good. Near the floor the masonry had fallen away, exposing the bars of the framework. Unmindful of the sniffing lion, Carl forced the chains nearest the door through the bars, secured the chains and brought them through to his side of the cage. The suddenness of his movements took the lion unawares, and it made no move at Carl, but drew slightly back in fright. The locks were snapped and Carl stood up to contemplate his work. It might do? But he had his doubts. What would happen when he opened the door to get at Amshied?

As he pondered for a moment, a cry came to his ears. Sana had awakened from her stupor to find the grinning face of Amshied close to hers.

With a smothered cry, Carl slid the door aside sufficiently to squeeze through and sprang into the room.

The lust-ridden Berber had partly torn Sana's clothing from her, and was forcing his attentions upon her. The girl, horrified with fear, tried to free herself from his grip.

But a whirlwind was upon him. He had no time

to get to his feet nor make any attempt to defend himself. With a fierce lunge Carl literally threw himself upon Amshied, forcing him to the floor.

Although taken by surprise as he was, Amshied was no weakling. Carl soon found this out when with a violent twist of his body Amshied rolled over and clutched at Carl's throat. With a trick learned at school Carl broke the hold, but Amshied was endowed with brute strength and he seized Carl around the body with both arms. Together they rolled across the floor, bringing up with a thud against the door.

They lay in deathlike embrace for a moment, panting from their exertions. Carl realized that Amshied was more than his match so far as mere strength was concerned. To overcome his antagonist he would have to resort to trickery. Heaving a deep sigh, as if utterly exhausted and unable to continue, he let his body relax. To his delight, Amshied was fooled completely. Believing Carl to be done for, he released his hold for a moment. Brief though this respite was, it was sufficient for Carl. Feeling the arms loosen ever so slightly, he suddenly twisted around, and with a quick movement of his knees had lifted Amshied, throwing him heavily on his side. At the same time Carl pinned his opponent with a neck lock, and rolling him over,

The Berber struggled fiercely to free himself from the encircling arm that was slowly choking him to death.

placed his knee in the small of Amshied's back and pressed.

Amshied struggled fiercely to free himself from the encircling arm that was slowly choking him to death. His efforts, however, were useless. Carl hung on with a desperate strength.

Slowly the other weakened, his breathing became more and more strained under the pressure on his throat and back. At last his body relaxed. Apparently he was unconscious. But Carl took no chances. Still retaining his grip, he rose to his feet. Then with a mighty heave he threw the senseless man to the further end of the small room, where he fell in a huddled heap to the floor. Carl noted, then, that Amshied's head was grotesquely twisted to one side. He would bother them no more!

Carl rushed to Sana, who had watched the struggle with bated breath. He sought to take her in his arms to carry her to freedom. But freedom was not to be theirs so soon. The three amazons were upon them. With wild shrieks they attacked Carl, who, not caring whether they were women or not, let them have the full force of his blows. Sana was at his side, with scratching nails and kicking feet. Another, too, came to their aid. Cintani coming

through the door, saw the struggle and with eager fists did her best to help.

The amazons soon had enough of fighting and with wild cries ran from the room, followed by Carl, Sana in his arms. His thoughts, now, were only to get away from that devilish place. Cintani, running at his side, grasped his arm and led him through a door out into the open. Smoke was pouring from the house. Someone had set it afire.

Their horses were still tied to a palm, nearby. Sana asked to be set down, and doing so, Carl did not notice the half-naked savage who crept up behind him, felling him senseless to the ground with a blow of a club.

Before Sana or the slave-girl could make any attempt to escape the savage, now joined by three others, was upon them. Struggle as they would they were helpless in the hands of these men. Sana had often heard stories of the cave-men who were said to live in the hills of the desert. Could it be possible that these four savages were such? Nothing seemed to fit them better than that name.

If they were men they surely did not look the part. They resembled monkeys more than anything else. Squat, long armed and covered with hair, they looked like giant denizens of a tropical forest. Their protruding jaws displayed tusk-like teeth,

while their receding foreheads ran back to red wool-like hair that covered their heads, shoulders and upper back.

Uttering growls, that sounded as unhuman as they looked, the larger of the four men, evidently the leader, took Sana up in his arms and started off. One of the others threw Cintani across his shoulders as if she were but an animal that had fallen victim to the chase.

Like a gift from heaven, unconsciousness came to Sana.

Carl, lying unconscious for several hours, came to in the early hours of the morning. Under the bright gleam of the desert stars he saw nothing but a heap of ashes and charred timbers—the remains of Amshied's dwelling.

His head still reeling from the blow he had received, he crawled to his feet and looked around for some sight of his beloved one. With a shock, he discovered in the ruins, several charred skeletons, totally beyond point of recognition. Carefully he studied them, going from one to the other in an attempt to find something by which to identify them.

Bewildered he stood up, kicking the ashes aside with the toe of his boot. Good God, what was that? Sana's necklace! He stooped to examine his find. Yes, it was the necklace Sana had worn

that morning when she started out on the ride with him. He was positive it was the same, for he had examined it closely then, commenting upon its uniqueness. Was this then the end of Sana—the end of life itself? Among those charred bones, he believed, lay all that was earthly of the woman he loved!

Heart heavy with anguish, his body trembling as with the ague, he knelt in prayer. The words came slowly—it was years since he had prayed—but in his heart he knew what he wanted to say.

With shaking hands he scooped a shallow grave in the sand, and in it placed the remains of the bodies. He must be sure that Sana's body found a grave. The tears streamed from his eyes as he carefully filled that last resting-place. The heaviest timbers he could find he laid across the grave, lest some prowling beast of the night should disturb the bodies. Above the little mound he fashioned a rude cross, from two smaller pieces of charred timber, and with a pencil he printed a marker on a piece of paper and pinned it to the cross.

Unmindful of the terrific heat of the desert sun which beat down upon him, he stumbled on, in a direction he believed would take him to the city. Luck was with him. Late that afternoon he reached Sana's home, wild-eyed and fever-tortured.

Sana's mother saw at a glance that some terrible accident had happened. But Carl's parched lips craved water, and putting her fears aside for the moment she wet his lips, bathed his dust-covered face and let him drink.

Then he spoke. Slowly he told the story. The old mother seemed to age before his eyes, as she moaned, "Sana, my child. Did I not warn you?" between her tears, as she sat rocking to and fro on the floor.

The minutes grew into hours and the two still sat there in silence—a silence broken only by the moans of the mother and a frequent sob or sigh from the man.

At last Carl roused himself from his lethargy. The desert fever had spent itself—his mind was once more clear, but his heart was heavy laden.

"What should he do? Whither was he going?" ran through his mind as he stood up from his chair.

As if reading this thought, the gypsy spoke, "You have your work to do. It was willed that this should happen. It is also written that you must do your duty. Your caravan leaves tomorrow. Join it and peace be with you."

"Yes, that is best. I could not stay here now."

He bade her a sad farewell and going to his hotel finished his preparations for the journey. This over

with, he threw himself, fully clad, upon the bed to while away those long dreadful hours before the dawn.

Sana returned to consciousness to find that the cavemen had camped for the night in a valley formed by the sand dunes. To her great relief, they did not bother about her or Cintani, but sat apart from them chattering in guttural tones, later to lie down to sleep.

Early next morning, the girls were again picked up and the savages set out with them for their home in the hills. The very thought of being clutched so tightly in the arms of the beast-like man, who held her close to him robbed her of all consciousness and she knew nothing of her travels until she came to with a start, lying on the ground with bound feet, surrounded by a strange group of men, women and children, in front of a large cave. The women and children, like the men, of whom Sana saw five, wore little or no clothing.

Physically, the women were better proportioned than the men, but they too looked more like animals than human beings. The women, however, had taken some pains to appear attractive to their men. One had a green feather stuck in her hair, while another had chosen a bunch of twigs for a headdress.

All of them wore a chain of shells around their necks.

She and Cintani were subjected to close inspection on the part of the women, accompanied by guttural growls from the men, who would shove the women aside, now and then, with sweeping blows of the arm.

The curiosity of the band satisfied, the leader, who had evidently chosen Sana for his own, picked her up and carried her into the cave. This was quite large, one side of the floor being strewn with the skins of wild animals. On these Sana was thrown. The savage walked away, but returned and sat down at her side.

With leering eyes he contemplated her figure, growling in a fearful manner. Sana could not understand his words, but shivered as she realized the meaning of his gestures. He reached over to untie her feet, but the touch of his rough hands on her limbs made her desperate. Summoning her strength, she kicked him in the side.

With what might have been a chuckle, he rose to his feet and walked to the other end of the cave. Returning with a club he shook it at the girl and threw it down at her side. Fearing an attack, Sana, covering her face with her hands, shrieked pitifully.

The cave-man, however, made no attempt to

touch her, but after looking at her for a time, turned and left the cave.

Greatly relieved, Sana drew herself up to a sitting position and looked around the cave. In the gloom she could see little, but she noticed that on the walls behind her were drawings of animals, while here and there were bows and arrows lying among the skins on the floor.

A sound came to her ears, and looking in the direction from which it came, she could distinguish in the gloom of the cavern, a young woman tending a new-born babe.

The mother paid no attention to Sana, nor was she disturbed the rest of the day.

With nightfall, however, the whole band entered the cave, bringing Cintani with them. Cintani was thrown to the floor at Sana's side, while the others, men, women and children, lay down in huddled heaps to sleep.

Sana's first words to Cintani were, "Where did those brutes come from?"

"About a week ago Amshied and his gang, who luckily were away, when you were there, returned with them. What he wanted to do with them, I do not know, but he kept them locked up in a room. I believe he was afraid of them himself. They must have escaped in the fire."

"But what will become of us?"

"I believe I have a way. I had no love for Amshied. I was sold to him as a slave. One day I stole a vial of poison, intending to kill myself. My courage failed me, but ever since that day I have carried it with me. I have it now. If I ever get the chance I shall poison them."

"If you only could. But how could we get away from here? We would never find our way."

"But our horses are here. I saw them. They brought them along too."

Overjoyed with these words, Sana started to say something, but was interrupted by the arrival of one of the men, who taking Cintani in his arms, carried her to the darkness of the other side of the cave.

Shutting her eyes, Sana put her hands over her ears to keep out any sound. Suddenly she was aware of someone at her side. Horrified, she felt a pair of hands steal over her. Looking, she saw her captor lying at her side. Without a word he reached down and released her feet. Again those hands upon her! With a cry she rolled over on her face, fearful of her fate. Much to her surprise the savage, after a few attempts to fondle her, retied her feet and hitting her some glancing blows, he shuffled off into the darkness.

Exhausted though she was, Sana lay awake the

entire night. Fear kept her from sleeping, fear of what might happen.

At daybreak the savages left the cave, taking Cintani with them. Sana they did not bother about, although one of the men stopped to stare at her on his way out.

Try as she would she could not keep awake any longer. Sleep came, dreamless sleep!

Some one was shaking her gently. Rousing herself, Sana looked up. Cintani was bending over her, smiling happily.

"We are safe now, dear. The poison has done its work."

Sana, comforted, yet surprised, "How did you do it?"

Tears welled in the girl's eyes as she brokenly whispered, "After what happened last night I supposed the women considered me one of them. They made me help with the food. That gave me my chance."

Sana wanted to take the weeping girl in her arms, but Cintani would not let her.

"There is no time to be lost," she urged, "Come, let us get out of this. I have food and water."

Once out of the cave, Sana saw that Cintani was right. The cave people were lying on the ground, apparently asleep, but theirs was an eternal slumber.

With delighted eyes, Sana saw the two horses. Quickly the girls mounted and rode off in the clear moonlight. Sana gave her horse his head, knowing that his instinct would tell him the way.

All that night their swift mounts put the miles under their feet. The desert stars, which had guided Sana, had disappeared and the sun, coming up from behind the dunes, saw the two girls riding wildly homeward, till night fell, then they rested for a few hours. Early in the morning they started out again.

Suddenly Sana's horse shied at something lying on the ground. A man was lying in the sand, face upward, writhing in the fever of thirst. Dismounting, Sana saw at a glance it was de Rochelle. He pleaded for help. At first she was tempted to ride on and leave him to his fate. But a kindlier thought prompted her to reach for her canteen which still hung intact at the saddle.

After administering a little water to the suffering man, she and Cintani managed to lift him across her horse and again they resumed their way.

Late in the afternoon the following day they came upon the remains of the Berber's house.

Sana dismounted, looking about for some trace of Carl, whom she had seen felled with the blow of the caveman's club. No sign of him was to be

Their swift mounts put the miles under feet, when they came across a man lying in the sand, writhing in the fever of thirst.

seen, but she presently became aware of a figure kneeling before a cross of charred timbers.

She saw it was a woman, and walking quickly towards her gave voice to the cry, "Mother!"

At the sound the woman took her hands from her face, and rising to her feet, shrieked, "Sana, my Sana!"

Mother and daughter embraced each other, tears in their eyes, murmuring words of endearment.

Sana, at last, eager for news of Carl, asked her mother whether she had seen or heard of him. In response the mother pointed to the cross—to which was pinned a note. Sana, stricken with fear that Carl was beneath the ruins, rushed to the cross, and taking the paper in her hand, read:

HERE LIES MY BELOVED
SANA VON SECKT
REST IN PEACE
CARL

"Then he is alive?" turning to her mother with eager eyes.

"Yes, beloved, he is alive. He is now on the great desert. He thought you dead and came to tell me. Then he went away."

De Rochelle, still weak and exhausted, had gotten from the horse, and came over to Sana.

"Sana, I did not believe you would ever do me the kindness you did. Please forgive me for what I have done. It was I who set fire to this place. I realized that harm might come to you through Amshied, so I set fire to the house, thinking I could help you in that way. I saw the savages take you away, and tried to follow, but fell exhausted. Please, forgive me, Sana, won't you?"

Without a word Sana turned away. Plead he might, but her forgiveness he would never have. The water she gave him on the desert, she felt, repaid him well enough—had she refused it, he would now have been claimed by the sun and the sand as their own. And in her woman's mind she knew that he had more to do with the escapade at the home of Amshied than he cared to tell.

Safe at home that night she wrote Carl at his New York address, telling him that she was alive.

CHAPTER IX

ON CAMEL'S BACK THROUGH THE SAHARA

MEANWHILE at sunrise on the day of his departure, Carl had gone to the market place to join the caravan. Among the crowd that gathered there, at the very time the caravan set out, he found Sana's mother, who had come to bid him goodbye.

From one of the tourists he learned that the caravan would lead over Tandini and Tenduf to Mogador in Morocco. This, he recalled, was the route followed by the crusaders of Islam, when they wandered through the desert lands, to preach Mohammedism with fire and sword.

The caravan itself consisted of some twenty-five racing camels, the true ships of the desert, capable of making from sixty to eighty miles a day. Besides these there were four freight camels, each loaded with about four hundred pounds of food and water, the latter being especially important, as for days they would not pass any wells.

Carl had noted with a smile that the tourists as well as the guides were dressed in Berber outfits; wide skirts and the gaily striped burnus, with its big collar. He saw, too, that there were several French officers in uniform in the party.

Like himself, everyone in the party was well armed. The guides, as well as some of the tourists, were provided with bandoliers of cartridges and carried rifles, while he noticed several of the others, not so visibly equipped, adjust cartridge belts and holsters. Taking the hint, he saw to it that his own automatic was fully loaded and his spare clips readily accessible.

Such precautions were necessary, of course, to enable them to repulse the attacks of any wild animals that, through pangs of hunger, might become daring enough to attack the travelers. To be dreaded, too, were the attacks of the bandits roving the sand hills. The chieftains of the larger bandit tribes had already received the regular tribute from the famous sheik Tan Jajidani, who in turn would be doubly paid by the wealthy merchant who furnished the camel and ran the show. While these would be satisfied to let the caravan in peace, there might be others not so inclined.

At last, with a great hullabaloo, the caravan was under way.

At first Carl experienced much discomfort, but he found that by relaxing and allowing his body to sway with the jogging steps of the camel, it wasn't as bad as he had expected.

Far ahead of the caravan rode two guides, whose duty it was to lead the way, and at the same time keep a sharp watch for unfriendly visitors.

Long before the main body of travelers would reach a village or camp, the inhabitants would swarm out to meet them, offering fruit or drink for sale, while at friendly camps water was offered to every one. To refuse to drink was considered an unfriendly act, and the guides cautioned all to be sure to partake of the hospitality.

Otherwise the journey that day was uneventful. There was nothing, outside of a few tiny camps or villages, to greet the eye but sand, desert sand.

Tents were pitched that night under the desert stars. The campfire gave forth a grateful warmth, for the night air was bitter cold. Carl was sorry that he was not outfitted with a woolen burnus, but knowing he would have to be up at daybreak, was soon comfortable between his blankets.

With the first rays of the sun peeping over the horizon, the caravan broke camp. Carl was amazed at the speed with which the camels were saddled or loaded, the tents folded away, and the caravan got-

ten on its way, accompanied by the singing of the guides and the jingle of the lead-camel's bells.

Thinking of Sana, he recalled of the manuscript he had taken with him.

He would have the whole day to himself, with nothing to do, so he took it from his pocket to read. The manuscript, written in a careful hand, was entitled, "The Conception of Our Universe."

. . . . . .

Two hundred years before Christ, the great mathematician Archimedes said, "Give me a fulcrum and I will move the earth!"

Our earth is a huge ball, about eight thousand miles in diameter and it weighs some six hundred trillion or sextillion tons. (To remember this place twenty-one ciphers after the six—6,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.) It is composed of rock, sand and water. Seventy-three per cent., or about three-quarters, of the earth is water—the balance, twenty-seven per cent., or about one-quarter, is solid matter, that is, rock or sand.

The entire surface of the earth measures nearly two hundred million square miles and in contents the earth is about two hundred and sixty billion cubic miles.

The earth is covered with a thin envelope of air and clouds which travels with the earth. If such was

not the case, a balloon rising in Europe could stay up three hours, and without moving from its position, land in North America. Furthermore, if the air blanket did not travel with the earth, it is probable that the earth would burn up, since the friction between the earth's surface and the air would develop great heat, a heat in which nothing could live.

The earth traveling in a magnetic field like that of a huge dynamo, speeds around its own imaginary axis, which lies at an angle of 23½ degrees, once in twenty-four hours. This is at a speed, when one stands at the Equator, say in North Africa, of more than a thousand miles per hour, whereas a few feet from the poles, the speed is not more than nineteen feet in twenty-four hours.

As it whirls around itself, the earth rushes through space in orbital motion, in an easterly direction around the sun, at a velocity of eighteen and a half miles per second, or six hundred and sixty-six thousand miles per hour, a speed that is about fifty times as great as that of the swiftest cannon ball. We earth people are entirely unconscious of this motion, since it is perfectly steady and without a jar.

Once in a year, that is in a little more than three hundred and sixty-five days, we travel around the sun, but remain away from that planet at a distance of about ninety-two million miles.

As we look upward at the sky at night we see, in all directions, the countless stars. Most pronounced among them and looking much the same, though of a different nature, are the planets and once in a while a comet. A few faintly shining clouds are seen—the Milky Way and Nebulae.

The most striking, and yet the most insignificant of them all is the moon.

During that period known as "day" to us the sun alone is visible, flooding the air with its light and thereby hiding all other heavenly bodies from the vision of the unaided eye—a few of them being visible through a telescope.

These heavenly bodies, for the most part, are globes like the earth. They whirl on their axes and move swiftly through space. They are classified as the solar system, made up of the sun, the planets which move round the sun and the satellites, which, in turn, attend the planets in their motion around the sun. Thus the moon attends the earth when the earth travels around the sun.

The sun, ninety-two million miles away from the earth, is a hot self-luminous globe, with a diameter of eight hundred and sixty-six thousand five hundred miles, or one hundred nine and one-half times that of the earth. The temperature at the sun surface has been calculated to range between ten and fifteen

thousand degrees Fahrenheit—a heat we cannot conceive.

Unlike the earth and the other planets, the sun, the center of our universe, is stationary; but it rotates on its own axis, inclined at seven and one-quarter degrees, once in twenty-seven and a half days. This motion has been established by observing the sun spots.

These sun spots vary in size from five hundred to fifty thousand miles in diameter and a group of such spots was found to be one hundred and fifty thousand miles across. They are short-lived phenomena, sometimes remaining only a few days but frequently a month or two. They appear in their greatest magnitude at periods of eleven years and are the cause of extreme drought on earth, with its resultant destruction of crops and vegetation, and consequent famines.

While until recently it was believed that the sun spots were eruptions on the sun, some astronomers now claim that, as the sun spots are cooler than the sun, they indicate the downpour of meteoric showers thrown by Jupiter and Saturn into the sun, thereby increasing the heat radiating from the sun.

The sun spots manifest themselves in world-wide heat waves, earthquakes, tidal waves, cloud bursts, floods, water spouts, hailstorms and hurricanes in

many widely separated parts of the earth. History has never seen the equal of the destruction caused by the last phenomena. A glance at a few of the recent disasters and natural phenomena shows the following:

The volcanoes Villarion, Liaima and Lanin spouted flames more than a thousand feet from their craters, while the activities of other volcanoes killed thousands of people. Six new craters opened in Mount Isalco, Salvador; the volcano Killauca in Hawaii spouted mountains of lava, which darkened the sky and earthquakes shook many parts of the earth. During the last three thousand years thirteen million people have met their deaths by volcano and earthquake.

Cyclones, hailstorms and floods wiped out many towns in various parts of the world; in Pueblo alone they caused damage aggregating more than ten million dollars. Many lives were lost in waterspouts, which destroyed part of Tangier, Morocco, and in the Maia-Doura province in Spain.

Heat caused the glaciers of the Alps to melt and move at an alarming speed, while lakes in Switzerland dried up, exposing their bottoms and showing foundations of the homes of the lake-dwellers living there thousands of years ago.

While the sun is the nearest of the stars, the moon

is the nearest of the heavenly bodies. It is about two hundred and forty thousand miles from the earth and has a diameter of about twenty-two hundred miles, or about one-quarter that of the earth. The moon, accompanying the earth in its movement around the sun, rotates on its axis once in twenty-nine and a half days and moves in a small orbit, once in twenty-seven and a third days, around the earth at a speed of nearly twenty-three hundred miles per hour. The moon shines merely by reflected light from the sun, whose light is six hundred thousand times brighter than that of the moon. The moon has a temperature of two hundred degrees below zero, Fahrenheit.

The surface of the moon structure, for the most part, is extremely broken. There are hills or mountains, but the surface is pitted all over with great "craters," ranging from fifty to one hundred miles in diameter; there being a few with a diameter of more than one thousand miles. A counterpart of this is hardly to be found on our earth, yet it is believed that the moon was once part of this earth, becoming separated from the parent body by the tremendous centrifugal force of the earth; as it is likewise assumed that Jupiter will in time throw off its "great red spot" thus forming a new moon of Jupiter.

It is believed that the planet Mars, which has two moons, is inhabited and that it has great irrigation canals, which engineers say are far superior to any irrigation system on earth. During the last sun spot period wireless signals were supposed to have been received from Mars.

From time to time, bodies very different from the stars and planets appear in the heavens, remaining visible for some weeks or months and then vanish in the distance. These are the comets. The larger ones are magnificent objects, sometimes as bright as Venus and visible by day, with a head as large as the moon and having a train or tail extending behind it from the horizon to the zenith and which is in reality long enough to reach from the earth to the sun.

Such comets, however, are rare, and in ancient and medieval times comets were always regarded with terror—as an evil omen—and at times the people believed that they foretold the end of the world, causing veritable panics, like the "comet scare" of France in 1832. As a rule these comets reappear at intervals, such as do Halley's, Euke's and Donati's comets. They travel at a tremendous speed, coming at times quite close to the earth. Quite often they cross the path of the earth, causing fear that a collision might take place. There are a few iso-

lated cases of comets colliding with the earth and killing a few people. Some of the comets have been lost, that is we do not know what became of them. Such a lost wanderer of the skies is Biela's comet; a comet of some forty thousand miles diameter. In its appearances, every sixth and sixteenth year, its course would come within a few thousand miles of the earth's orbit.

Besides the luminous clouds we see in the heavens and which, under the telescope are shown to be but great groups of separate stars, there are others which no telescopic power has as yet been able to disclose individually. These are known as nebulae and are of varying shape and form and very beautiful in appearance.

Once in a while the earth passes through such a nebulae. Some years ago the Heidelberg Observatory reported that the earth was passing through some such nebulae, which report was confirmed by various other observatories. In that case there was no noticeable effect on human life, but it is believed by astronomers that some of these nebulae are composed of strong poisonous gases and that if ever the earth passes through such a nebulae all life on this planet will be destroyed.

Occasionally bodies fall upon the earth out of the sky. These are the meteors. They are not notice-

able until they come within our air zone, when the friction between them and the air causes them to become red hot, often being entirely consumed by the heat before reaching the earth itself. They travel through the air zone at a speed ranging from ten to forty miles per second, accompanied by a heavy continuous roar, emphasized now and then by violent detonations. These meteors are solid bodies; containing a large percentage of iron and copper and single pieces have been found to weigh as much as seventy-five thousand pounds.

It is believed that these meteors are fragments which, ages ago, were shot out from now extinct volcanoes, with so great a velocity that they were thrown out beyond the attraction of the earth, and so becoming individual planets or heavenly bodies for the time being. Such being the case, they have traveled in independent orbits, until they at last encountered the earth at a point where her orbit crosses theirs. It may also be possible that these meteors were thrown from the planets or the stars, and as meteoric showers occur at intervals of thirty-three to thirty-four years, it is often believed that they are connected with comets and that therefore the comets, too, must be solid bodies like our earth. The number of meteors falling upon the earth adds

continuously to the earth's mass at a rate of about forty thousand tons per year.

Our earth is older than five hundred million years, according to Prof. Morean of Bourges Observatory, France, who holds that for half of that time, two hundred and fifty million years, some form of life has existed on its surface. Man, however, can boast of only some ten thousand years of ancestry in direct lines. In other words, in the life of this little globe he is, even in his most primitive form, a very recent arrival.

The earth was once a hot gaseous mass like the sun. Gradually the surface cooled, condensation took place forming the lakes and seas and after a great period of time vegetation appeared.

Water, entering the bowels of the earth, through cracks or some such opening in the surface, would evaporate into steam and under high pressure break through the earth crust and create a volcano, carrying with it great masses of molten rock. The hot geysers of Yellowstone Park, in America, are similar examples of such internal action.

In historic times there were lakes in the Sahara Desert and the so-called "Hopeless Desert" lying in the Rocky Mountains of North America, while in the Sierra Nevadas there was a time, not more than a million years ago, when all of the territory was

well watered and vegetated. One of these lakes, in western Utah and extending over into Nevada, was one hundred and seventy-five miles wide, two hundred and fifty miles long and in places over a thousand feet in depth. Other evidences of this phenomenon, of tremendous masses of water entering into the bowels of the earth, are found particularly in the many caves among the Pyrenees and in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, the largest cavern in the world, in the upper galleries of which can still be seen the perforations through which the waters descended.

As we descend into the earth we observe an increase in temperature of one degree Fahrenheit for every fifty feet. At a depth of ten or twelve miles the earth is red hot. At a depth of a hundred miles the temperature is so great that if at the surface of the earth it would liquefy all solid matter.

Not only lakes and seas have disappeared, but whole continents, in much more peculiar ways. Where the Atlantic Ocean now lies, there was once, some four million years ago, a continent which we call "Atlantis," connecting America with Africa, and believed to have been peopled with a race far more intelligent than any now existing upon the earth. They were one-eyed and had conquered the laws of nature; their airships flying by natural forces, such

as do our sailboats. Their animals could speak and had great destructive powers. But this can be only hearsay, since now "Atlantis" lies at the bottom of the ocean, gone forever, like many mountains which have likewise gone down into the waters.

These surface changes, together with internal disturbances, created a wandering polar system and bodily displacement of both poles took place. With this came a great change in the climate of the earth. The lands of the present equator, which, only some twenty thousand years ago, were as cold as our present arctic zones, became tropical in climate, while the flourishing lands at the north and south poles grew desolate and cold, as they are today. The pole-axis of the earth has since changed considerably—Europe, only some twelve thousand years ago being covered with a great ice sheet.

The highest peak of the earth is Mount Everest, twenty-nine thousand feet above sea level, and the greatest depth of the sea is more than twenty-five thousand feet. Some of the earth's surface lies below sea level, but it is not flooded on account of being surrounded by mountain ranges. A great part of the Sahara, for instance, is below sea level. The Sahara, less inhabited than any other area of the earth, covers one-twelfth part of the land surface of the earth, having an area of some four million

square miles. It is by no means all sand; there are some plateaus and oases. In the days of Julius Caesar it was a fertile, well cultivated land, and was known as the "Granary of the Roman Empire." With the fall of the old Roman Empire, however, the desert was neglected and the sands swallowed up the fertile lands.

Scientists and explorers have dreamed for generations of schemes not only to cultivate the desert, but to put such fertile lands within the reach of industry. It is estimated that the Sahara could easily support a population of two hundred million souls and in addition supply Europe with all her fruit, vegetables, cereals and cotton, in fact with all products that are at present produced in North America.

The government of France, some fifty years ago, wanted to build a fifty-mile canal and let the waters of the ocean flow in to submerge and flood a great part of the Sahara, so as to change the climate and produce vegetation. Such a plan, however, would not only change the climate of the Sahara, but would change the climates of all the countries of the entire world, with dire consequences, and to such an extent that the end of the world would be believed near.

As it concerns our world it is something in which every individual should be interested.

Let us have a look at the paradox of our universe or rather the theories of our astronomers.

The astronomers contend that our earth was millions of years in the process of evolution and that man has been on the earth but a comparatively short time. Religion tells us that the earth, seas, sun, moon and stars were all created in six days of twenty-four hours each. Which is right?

If the earth is a globe with a curvature of twenty-four feet in every six miles, how is it that the Mississippi River starting as it does, at a low level, travels at an incline and toward the equator, the largest diameter of the earth; that is traveling uphill and reaches the sea after twenty-seven hundred miles. Do astronomers overlook this fact?

Astronomers contend that our earth spins around an imaginary axis—a ball weighing six hundred trillion tons, and eight thousand miles in diameter spinning around an imaginary axis! What gave the earth the original momentum five hundred million years ago, and what keeps it up? Did the speed of the earth increase or decrease with the evolution of the earth?

These same men of high learning say that the earth, composed of rock, sand and water, travels at the equator at a speed of more than one thousand miles per hour or one hundred and fifty thousand

feet per second. Yet any engineer knows that a spinning flywheel of solid iron will fly apart at a speed of from twenty to thirty thousand feet per second. By what power, then, is the earth held together?

Then again they say that the lands at the north and south poles spin around like a merry-go-round. Did the men who discovered the poles make any report of being made sea-sick?

If the sun is stationary and the earth moves around it, how could Joshua have commanded the sun to sand still and was obeyed, as the Bible says?

If the moon, as the astronomers contend, is a body thrown from the earth by centrifugal force, while the earth was still in a semi-fluid state, why was it thrown just that distance, two hundred and forty thousand miles, no further or no less; why did it then change its course and float in empty space, ever since accompanying the earth in its travels around the sun?

What becomes of the ocean waters at the high point of the equator? Do they flow by gravity, like the waters of a stream, toward the lower levels, the north and south poles? Who and what holds that water in place between the poles and the equator? Take a rough surfaced metal ball upon a spindle and speed it up to a surface speed of one

thousand miles per hour, let us say; charge it with electricity as the earth is said to be charged, then pour water on the spinning ball. Will it adhere to the ball or does the centrifugal force throw it off in all directions?

If standing water has not a uniform level, let our astronomers build a tank, several miles long, such as the watering channels used by the railroads. Would the level of this standing water be higher at one end than at the other?

Or was Copernicus wrong as well as all other astronomers who blindly believe in him, like they blindly followed the theory of gravity until another came along and told us we were all wrong?

We believed, for years, that we could locate a star in a fixed position. Now we are told by Einstein that it cannot be done because the rays of the stars are bent when passing through the gravitational field of the sun.

These are but a few of the seemingly contradictory theories of our universe, which speculative science would have the unsophisticated public believe.

I often ask myself, is the universe a huge Fata Morgana, covered by a veil no mortal shall ever lift?

Truly the guesses of one generation are but the

amusements of another. If it were possible to cruise the distant heavens some startling facts would no doubt be revealed. As yet it is all a dream.

. . . . . .

Finishing the article, Carl folded it and put it away. To himself, half aloud he muttered, "Whew! That sets one to thinking. This is something I have been looking for for a long time—the universe in a nutshell. Too bad he didn't live to finish and publish it. It would have given the world something to talk about."

Once more his thoughts went to his beloved. "Poor Sana," he murmured, "I miss you so. Just when my hopes were highest, just when the future looked its rosiest, you had to be taken away from me. Two days of happiness and then all is misery. Like a vision you came and went."

His head bowed, he rode on in silence. Sana had been very dear to him and the hurt was great.

Suddenly, shots ringing clear in the desert air, roused him from his dreams. From behind a large sand hill rode a band of Arabs, shaking their rifles and crying loudly.

The caravan halted, and the travelers made haste to return the fire of the bandits. Unslinging his automatic Carl accounted for two of the attackers,

while some of the others fell before the rifles of the guides and the army officers.

It was all over in a few minutes. The bandits, outnumbered two to one, rode off leaving half their number behind, dead or badly wounded.

Fortunately the caravan suffered little. One of the camels had been killed, while one of the travelers, an elderly Englishman, suffered a slight wound in the arm. This was immediately treated by one of the guides, and after the excitement had died down, the caravan again set out across the desert.

CHAPTER X

THE LOVER'S DREAM

DAY after day the caravan moved slowly on, under the blazing sun of the desert.

One day was much like the other, just sand and sun, sun and sand. Days of intense heat, nights of extreme cold!

It was getting too monotonous for Carl. Inaction of body allowed too great a freedom of mind. His days and nights were filled with thoughts of Sana, thoughts that became maddening as he realized the futility of life. Thoughts which made him more and more morose as the days went by.

Only once did he show a mutual interest in the things that occurred about him. That was when one of the travelers called his attention to a beautiful oasis nearby, to which, however, the guides paid not the slightest attention. Questioned as to why the caravan did not stop, the guides replied to the effect that this was but a mirage of the Gurara Oasis, some five hundred miles away.

For a few minutes they watched it, shimmering

in the sunlight. Then it was gone as quickly as it had appeared.

"Fata Morgana" mused Carl, "Life and it are the same—just an illusion."

That night they reached Tenduff, having placed a thousand miles of desert behind them.

The following day they reached the sand-hill region of Igidi. Here the desert looked as if on fire. The sands glowed red beneath the blazing sun. In the distance one could see great whirling clouds of sand, rising hundreds of feet in the air.

The caravan halted. For a time it looked as if the storm would pass in another direction. Suddenly, however, it was upon them. The sky was darkened with the flying sand, the very ground itself seemed to be shifting under the fury of the storm.

Instinctively the camels had lowered themselves to the ground. The travelers, under the direction of the guides, quickly threw themselves on the sands alongside of their beasts, covering themselves as best they could with their cloaks.

For two long hours the storm raged—hours that seemed eternity to the suffocating men. Try as they would, they could not keep the dustlike sand from entering their eyes, nose and mouth. It was necessary, too, that they rise up for a minute or two to keep from being sanded in.

The sky was darkened with the sand storm; instinctively the camels lowered themselves and the travelers threw themselves on the shifting sand, alongside of their beasts.

At last the storm was spent and the air once more fit to breathe. Man and beast stood up, shaking off their burdens of sand, to resume their journey. But thirty miles had been covered so far that day and they faced twenty more miles before they could rest.

Carl was worn out. The storm and his general indisposition had got the better of him. It was with difficulty that he mounted his camel, and once up, it was harder still for him to keep awake.

For a time he struggled with the desire to sleep, but it was useless.

Gone now was the caravan, gone the desert! Sana and he were in a huge aeroplane. It was their first flight together in the "Meteor," as he had named it. Long had he worked to perfect this machine. Nothing similar had ever before been devised. Its large bullet-shaped body and spreading wings gave it the appearance of a gigantic bird. It flew without an engine, propelled by an invisible force, the secret of which was his, alighting and soaring at will, through wind or calm. It would hover in the air like a hawk and at the pressure of his hand on a lever would rush through space at an unlimited speed. He had gotten a thousand miles an hour out of it, but that was nothing compared to what it could do!

Below them lay what was once the great Sahara Desert. But how different now! The great canal had been dug and the waters of the sea let in but a short year before. Already the country had changed—great fertile fields had sprung up on all sides. Gone were the sand hills—gone too, Sana cried, was her Gurara Oasis.

Swinging southward they soon passed over the great jungles of Africa. Here, too, a mighty change had been wrought. The tropical climate had gone, the jungle life was dying. Ice was forming on some of the swamps. Strange beasts were wandering about aimlessly, seeking a warmer land. Among these were animals of which modern man knew little or nothing—the unicorn for instance, an animal existing only in the imagination of writers and artists, or as Carl noted, through his powerful field glasses, a monstrous dinosaur, walking on its high legs. He had seen many skeletons of that primitive beast in museums all over the world, but he had believed, with the rest of the world, that no such animal existed in modern times. Yet here it was, driven from its jungle haunts by the ever increasing cold. The natives, too, he saw bewildered and afraid—huddled close to their fires, filled with wonder and dismay.

In Europe they found similar climatic changes. It was July, but everywhere the people were wearing

their heaviest clothing to keep warm. The vegetation of the land was being slowly but surely destroyed by the terrible frosts. People were dying by millions because of the lack of food and the diseases that swept the land.

Forgotten were the hatreds of war—forgotten the enmities of society. Nations were striving with each other to maintain life. In Germany Carl found the entire resources devoted to the manufacture and distribution of a chemical preparation which was to take the place of food for the Germans and other peoples of Europe.

Throughout Europe all communication by wireless, by telegraph or telephone was halted. This was caused by the continual display of the so-called "Northern Lights," now of much greater intensity in Europe than ever witnessed before even at the North Pole.

In a flight over the Arctic regions they saw the great ice flows break up and drift southward, exposing land that had never been known to exist.

Volcanoes, long thought to have been extinct, suddenly came to life, belching forth numerous pillars of ashes, smoke and molten lava. On the western coast of North America a great earthquake took place, throwing up a range of mountains thousands of feet high, accompanied by untold loss and life

and property. So frequent and great were the earthquakes that shook the globe that it was feared by the learned men the world over that the world would be literally shattered to pieces. Large bodies of water, which had accumulated in the Sahara, seeped through the dry sand into the hot bowels of the earth, where the water was converted into steam and under high pressure caused the eruption and explosion of numerous volcanoes.

Ocean steamers fortunate enough to avoid the great icebergs that were daily gathering their toll of life or the terrible waterspouts that occurred in every part of the sea would not respond to the compass. Their masters reported that the needles pointed far away from what had been north. The earth had been thrown out of balance! This explained to some extent the change of climate the world over. Lands that had been in equatorial regions were thrown north or south with regard to their position in relation to the sun.

The saying of Archimedes, "Give me a fulcrum and I will move the earth," had come true. But instead of a lever and fulcrum, a counter ballast of water, flooding the Sahara, had done the work.

Scientists began to speculate as to the course the earth would follow in its yearly movement around the sun. By comparative astronomical measure-

ments it was established that the earth was following a path greatly deflected from its former orbit, while other planets flouted the rules as to orbits and behaved more like comets. Would the earth now collide with other planets, was the question on everyone's lips. All the fixed "rules of thumb" the astronomers used had to be discarded for new calculations and guesswork.

And the earth was traveling through unknown space at a speed of six hundred and sixty-six thousand miles an hour!

Then came the age of darkness! The millions of tons of dust and ashes thrown into the heavens from the hundreds of erupting volcanoes, traveling with the winds of the earth, formed a heavy film through which the rays of the sun could barely penetrate. The air grew cold; blizzards were ever more frequent and severe; gradually the earth was sheathed in a covering of ice.

But through the darkness there came a light, growing brighter and brighter as the days went by.

Astronomers reported that this strange light came from an unknown comet traveling at great speed toward the earth. As time passed the entire horizon was illuminated by this strange visitor. The light became brighter and more intense than that of the

hottest sun. And nearer and nearer it came to the earth!

All over the world anxious eyes watched the comet night and day. Was the end of the world at hand? The most irreligious people spent days and nights in prayer. Nations set prayer-days to save the world from destruction. People lost their reason and wandered around helplessly and aimlessly, until maddened entirely they took their lives.

A poisonous gas swept over the face of the earth. Chemists and scientists alike were baffled in their attempts to analyze it. Was it caused by the passing of the world through one of the nebulae, which long had been regarded as composed of dangerous gases? Or could it be that the comet now speeding toward them was discharging these gases? They could find no answer.

But whatever it was, it was taking fearful toll on earth. Never had anything like it been witnessed before. Men dropped dead in the streets. Women, their babes at their breasts, died in their homes. The open air was no longer safe. Even the houses were penetrated regardless of what precautions were taken to stop up crevices in doors and windows.

Life on earth was unbearable!

Carl, disgusted with the miserable condition, determined, then, that he and his wife, Sana, would

leave the now inhospitable earth and seek a haven of refuge on some other planet.

It was but a matter of hours to make arrangements. A generous supply of the artificial food was put into the machine. They did not have to worry about fuel, as the "Meteor" would generate its mysterious power as it traveled. Carl had explained this to Sana, confidentially. Fuel for the engines, if such the delicate apparatus might be called, was secured directly from the atmosphere. The higher the speed of the plane the more rarefied the atmosphere, the better the quality of fuel. Furthermore, Carl did not have to attend any steering devices. The plane traveled in an electric wave zone, driven forward by this new device, and once headed in any desired direction would continue in that direction indefinitely.

Helping Sana into the enclosed body of the "Meteor," Carl bade farewell to the earth. Soon they were speeding heavenward at a tremendous pace, going in the direction of the earth's rotation.

Looking out of the port-hole-like windows of the plane Carl and Sana saw that they had already passed through the dust cloud which enveloped the earth. As they watched, they saw the earth and moon whiz past them with the speed of falling comets.

From this time on their mentality was severed from that of the peoples of the earth. They were independent of the conception of time, which, really, exists only in the minds of the human race, according to Einstein's theory.

An unusual sight now presented itself to the flying couple. The great comet that had caused so much consternation on earth was in plain view. Behind the tremendous sun-like head trailed a most imposing tail, millions of miles in length, and from all appearances composed of gases and without any sharp lines of demarkation. This tail had not been visible to the watchers on earth because of the great dust cloud. To Carl and Sana, however, it was quite distinct, looking much like a great inverted comma, imprinted on the endless depths of the sky.

It was necessary for Carl, after a while, to go to the pressure chambers to replenish the air supply of their cabin. This done, he idly fingered the tuning dials of the wireless apparatus with which the plane was equipped. To his surprise the cabin was filled with the sound of incoming messages. He endeavored to interpret them but they were in a language unknown to him. Somewhere out in the ether there existed people, he realized, of an intelligence far greater than that of the earth-men.

Tuning down the wireless, he returned to Sana,

who was again peering through the windows of the plane at the myriads of stars that went flashing by.

Now a great planet came into view. Carl recognized Saturn, 750 times the size of the earth. Around it traveled a broad concentric ring. It was accompanied by ten moons.

They kept up their wild flight, passing, after some days—according to Carl's watch, at a great distance, Uranus. In the distance they observed Neptune and realizing that upon reaching it, they would be some three billion miles from home, so they decided to turn homeward. With a great sweep taking several days the "Meteor" shot around Neptune, and again after two weeks they passed Uranus and Saturn. After a while the great planet Jupiter passed them, or rather they passed the planet, although flying at their terrific speed they were unconscious of motion.

In the distance loomed up the Milky Way, comprised as they saw, of billions of stars closely grouped together. Not wishing to encounter any of these stars, Carl swung the plane in a wide detour.

This danger passed, the plane hummed along for a few hours, when Carl, looking downward, saw beneath them the planet Mars. Throttling down their speed they hung suspended above that planet at a few miles height. From their position they could see the great canal systems which brought the waters from the

snow and ice clad polar regions to the more temperate zones. These zones, they saw, were covered with large areas of vegetation, nesting among which were what appeared to be cities. Above these cities flew countless airplanes, not so very much different in appearance from those used on earth.

With "Let us land here," Carl guided the "Meteor" Mars-ward, landing shortly in a field covered with moss and strange plants.

Immediately their plane was surrounded by a host of strange people. In form they were very much like the people of the earth. They were, however, much smaller and had heads large out of all proportion to their bodies. Clothes too, were not to be seen.

Before they left the plane Carl warned Sana to be very careful how she moved about. As Mars is only one tenth the size of the earth in volume, gravitation is likewise less. Carl who, on earth weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds, would weigh but sixty-four or five pounds on Mars. He told Sana, jokingly, that she could easily step over their huge airplane, while a Martian would break his neck if he tried to jump over an ordinary soap box.

To the Martians, Sana and Carl must have appeared quite strange, both as to size and clothing.

For a time the crowd stood at a distance as if in awe of these strange beings that had come to them out of the skies. At length, however, one of the group stepped forward and spoke. Much to his surprise Carl realized that he understood him perfectly. And stranger, still, Carl found himself answering in a language that was new to his ears.

Courteously they questioned him as to his desires, and being informed that Carl and Sana had flown through space from the earth, their amazement was without bounds. Would more follow him, they asked, to which Carl was quick to reply that none would come. Realizing their doubt, he assured them that he alone knew the secret of his flight and that no other earth-men could make the journey.

Assured at last, that these two visitors had come without intent to harm, they led Carl and Sana to a great hall, where food and drink were served them. Food and drink such as they had never tasted before! The various dishes of chemical food had the same brown granular appearance, but when placed in the mouth each gave a different taste and had different satisfying qualities. The same applied to the drinks. One could not be distinguished from the other, either in appearance or odor, yet each was distinctly different to the palate.

The hall or room and its furnishings, they noted,

were very much like those of the earth. While this was indeed strange, Carl reasoned that there was no good reason why two worlds of people, although separated by untold miles, should not conceive things along the same lines.

Having eaten, Carl and Sana were informed that they could come and go as they pleased among the people of Mars. Whatever they wished was theirs for the asking—as was the case with all Martians.

This promise of freedom proved well founded. Together Carl and Sana studied and explored without interference, although they soon realized that their every move was witnessed by some Martian or other.

Life on Mars, they found to be Utopian in the fullest sense of the word, compared to which the democracies of the earth were naught but the greatest farces. Mars, of course, was a much older world compared with the earth, so far as human life was concerned and naturally greater things could have been accomplished.

Here on Mars each individual was accountable to his neighbor for a certain amount of work; every man, woman and child had some one thing to do, and did it willingly.

They had long realized that upon the proper application of scientific knowledge depended the wel-

fare of their civilization. Science was their God, and they worshiped it as we do our Creator!

Most marvelous of the many wonderful things the two earth people encountered on every hand was the application of wireless to many walks of life. Every Martian carried a small and delicate receiving set with him. No matter where he was he was always equipped and ready for whatever message might be sent him. Numerous stations were continually broadcasting the news of the day. No papers were needed; in fact the written language had been discarded long ago as an obsolete thing. There were no schools, churches, or meeting halls such as we have on earth. The people sat in their homes and were informed of all there was to know.

Transportation, too, differed greatly from that of the earth. All the railways were underground, and instead of tracks and wheeled cars, such as we have, cylindrical tubes were shot forward like pistons in a cylinder, or rather these cylinder-like cars were sucked from one station to another, at a terrific speed, by means of great solenoids, the electrical current for which was secured from the numerous hydro-electric generating stations that dotted the banks of the canals, which served the Martians a double purpose. They furnished the water needed

to irrigate the fields and at the same time ran the generating plants.

Carl was forcibly struck by the ingenuity displayed in the utilizing of these canal waters. The waters used at one station, after being discharged, were carried along for a short distance, until, through a series of steps it fell to a lower level, to again be used by a generating station. It was only after it had served its purpose of generating power that the water was finally pumped over the fields. The fields ran along both sides of the canals for thousands of miles and averaged perhaps fifteen miles in width. He saw, too, that while most of the canals ran parallel with each other, there were some that crossed each other at different elevations.

Very little labor was performed by hand. Practically all the work on Mars was done by electrical machinery, devised by the inhabitants of that strange world.

Much traveling was done by means of airplanes, such as they had noticed when first they hovered over the planet. These airplanes had no engines, but were propelled by wireless from stations on land. Freight planes, too, sailed prescribed courses, without pilots, guided by a lone operator in a distant tower.

For a time things ran along smoothly but at last Carl and Sana realized that they would soon have to return to earth. Life was dear to them and their days were numbered if they continued to live upon Mars. The rarity of the atmosphere and the strange mode of living was making its impression upon them. Besides, they noted, the ever increasing hostility on the part of some of the Martians.

Carl waited until their baby was born and Sana well on the road to recovery, before making any definite plans for the future.

Came the day, however, when they went once more to the "Meteor" to leave that strange land. And just in time. The plane literally swarmed with Martians, who, from all appearances were doing their utmost to dismantle it. At Carl's approach they fell back, taken by surprise.

One of the Martians, in particular, was quite hostile and abusive. With a snarl he attempted to take baby Charlie from Sana, who screamed to Carl for help. Carl, with a spring, was at her side. Without hesitating an instance he swung his arm and landed a mighty blow on the head of the offender. To the surprise of all, the Martian did not fall, but went flying through the air, at a height of perhaps twenty feet, to land in a misshapen heap some hundred yards away.

This sight cowed the rest of them to a certain extent. Carl had time to help Sana and the baby into the cabin of the plane, give a hasty glance at the mechanism at the head of the machine, climb inside and shut the door, which automatically was hermetically sealed.

Once more the Martians swarmed about the "Meteor" in a last attempt to prevent its leaving the ground. Their efforts were, of course, useless. No power on earth or Mars could have held the "Meteor," once Carl established his electric zone, the airplane would shoot forward at the speed of electric waves. With a rush they were off, soaring far out into space, followed, as they saw upon looking back, by a myriad of Martian airplanes, which, although capable of traveling at a speed greater than any ordinary airplane of the earth, were soon outdistanced.

Looking at one of the wings, Carl saw, hanging on, with a desperation caused by fear and astonishment, a Martian at the end of the wing. Apparently he had been unable to scramble off when the "Meteor" had started.

Without saying anything to Sana as to this, Carl flapped the encumbered wing in the way a bird would, and saw the Martian torn from his grasp and catapulted far out into space, only to describe

a wide arc and fall like a plummet down into the limitless depths. Would he, Carl mused, too become a wanderer of the skies?

Putting the countless miles speedily behind them, the "Meteor" at last came in sight of the moon. Calling Sana to his side, Carl let their ship hover above that cold dead world. The sight below them was fearful—the planet was a veritable charnel-house. Countless circular mountain ranges, looking like great inactive volcanic craters, some of them hundreds of miles in diameter and with ramparts more than twenty-five thousand feet high, studded the surface of the moon. Between these mountain ranges the surface of the moon was scarred with great clefts or crevices, evidently caused by the sudden cooling of that planet.

Recalling that among the various books they had with them, was one containing photographic maps of the moon, compiled by the greatest of the earth's astronomers, Carl procured it and with Sana's assistance, compared the pictured maps with the planet itself. Yes, there was the great Copernicus crater, with its strange central peak rising some eleven thousand feet from the bottom of the pit, although the peak rose only some two thousand five hundred feet above the surface of the moon. There was the Plato crater, sixty miles in diameter with peaks over

seven thousand feet high; Clavius, one hundred and forty miles from rampart to rampart with peaks sixteen thousand feet high; Herschel ninety miles in diameter; Gauss and Humbolt each about one hundred miles across. He recognized, too, the lunar Apennines, some four thousand five hundred miles long, soaring in rugged steps to a height of eighteen thousand feet; the lunar Alps, consisting of some hundred peaks, rising to a height of ten thousand feet, while the great peaks of the Doerfel and Leipnitz mountains overshadowed all in their majestic heights of twenty-six to twenty-seven thousand feet.

Gleaming white, dull red and brilliant yellow the peaks and craters reflected the rays of the sun. A beautiful sight, indeed, yet more impressive, to Carl, was the fact that the planet they inspected was but the skeleton of what might once have been a world of life and progress. Who knows?

Leaving the moon behind, they headed for the earth. The dust clouds had disappeared and the land and water surfaces were clearly visible even at their great distance. Their earth-home was once again in sight. A feeling of happiness stole over the returning wanderers. Truly, there is no place like home.

Guiding the "Meteor" in the direction of the

earth's rotation, they swooped earthward, landing at last in a highly vegetated field.

People were working the lands, using, Carl soon saw rather primitive implements. The alighting airplane caused a great deal of commotion among these people, but seeing that the people who stepped from the machine were human beings, looking much like themselves, they soon got over their fright, and came forward, eager questions on their lips.

They spoke a sort of dialect English, and Carl had little difficulty in making himself understood. He informed them that he, too, was an earth-dweller, who had returned with his wife and baby from a trip to a distant world. Amazement was plain on every face, but they assured him of their belief in what he said, adding that they had never before seen such a thing as the strange ship in which he had come, although their books taught them that there was a time when earthmen flew about in some such machines.

Scarcely believing his ears, Carl asked them the name of the country in which he had landed, and was told it was called "Artonia."

"Artonia? I have never heard of that. Where is it in location to the rest of the world?"

He learned, then, that this was the region of the one-time North Pole, as it was called ages ago.

"Ages ago? What year is it now?" he asked, amazed.

"It is the year 3831," came the reply.

"3831?" questioned his mind. Unbelievable! Nearly two thousand years of earth-time had elapsed during their journey, and to them it had seemed but the matter of a year. Turning to Sana, Carl said, "Is it possible that Einstein was right?"

If such changes had been wrought at the pole, what had happened to the rest of the world? What had become of the great cities of the world and their people? Sadly they realized that they alone of the old order of things existed. This world, their home, would be as strange to them as Mars!

They might as well utilize their means of travel and visit the other parts of the globe. The "Meteor," although badly strained by the severe use to which it had been subjected in their flight, would still suffice them on earth. They, in turn, had become nomads of the earth—wanderers without a place they could call home. Men without a world!

Their supply of the artificial food had about been exhausted, and Carl questioned the strange folk as to where he could purchase food. At his remark, "But I have little money," they asked curiously, "Money? What is that?"

Carl tried to explain, but they did not understand.

He knew then that they, in their primitiveness had not yet reached the stage where a standard form of exchange was required. So he reverted to their method of barter.

He had not much choice in the way of what to offer. In fact the only things he had were his books. Perhaps they would serve his purpose. And serve his purpose they did. Cooked meats, fruits and vegetables galore were given him in exchange for a single book—a book of wild game hunt in Africa. He noted with a smile, that it was the pictures that interested these people. They passed the book from hand to hand, looking at the highly colored illustrations, like so many amused school children.

Promising these new made friends that they would return to them, to tell them of what they had seen in their tour of the world, they said goodbye, and headed for Europe.

The Europe they had known was gone—gone were the great centers of population, gone were the peoples they had known, swallowed up, all, in the relentless march of Time!

Gone too, were the great nations of Europe, as Carl and Sana knew them. All that remained of the once great British Empire was the little isle of England—the rest of her domains had shaken off the yoke and were independent countries.

In France a greater change had taken place. The one-time French race had completely extinguished itself generations before. The land was now overrun with a polyglot race of Russians and Germans, who were more phlegmatic than ever.

Germany and the other countries of Europe, too, were changed to such an extent that there was no comparison between the order now in existence and the order that had passed.

In all Europe laws of equality of man had been established, so that now all men were equally rich, or rather equally poor. Equally poor, because, there was no longer any incentive or inducement to strive to gain. The people had become drones to an extreme degree. There was no reward for labor, so none labored. No man tried to outdo his neighbor, for in the end, his neighbor had as much as he. Hence progress had ceased long ago. There was no industry worthy of the name. Civilization, as Carl and Sana knew it, was, too, a thing of the past.

To all appearances, the people existed only because they did not die. Nothing mattered to them but food, and as eating was a necessary evil, they procured their food, individually, with as little exertion as was possible. Too lazy, in most instances, to even cook the fish and game they caught, they ate it raw, and having filled their bellies, would lie

down beside their mates to sleep until they were hungry again.

Landing in North Africa, both Carl and Sana were astounded at the changes that had taken place. The once barren wastes of the desert country had been converted, as if by the wave of a magic wand, into a great agricultural country. The terrific heat of the days and the freezing cold of the nights had gone and in their place was a mild climate, similar to that of the central United States. With this great change had come prosperity; prosperity of such magnitude as to even surpass that of Carl's own country at the time he and Sana had taken flight from the earth.

The flooding of the lower desert areas, while inundating tremendous territory, had caused the surrounding lands to become fertile, rich in nitrates and plant values. The people of the new, for such it was, land, were the descendants of the one-time semi-savage races. Now they numbered some two hundred millions and in truth had become a mighty race, rich in power and wealth.

On every hand, Carl and Sana, saw bodies of soldiers in training. On inquiring as to this, they were informed that ages ago France had taught them the military arts. Today these people believed the entire world was in fear of them. In fact they

were bragging of the great military strength and boasted of the fact that for centuries no nation had even so much as dared try to exploit them.

Sana pointed out to Carl that these people were not as dark of skin as they were when the land was still a desert. On hearing her remark, a native man, of apparent great learning, and who was acting as a sort of self-appointed guide to the couple, explained, saying:

"Ages ago, that is, some two thousand years ago, France used our people to fight her wars against other nations of white peoples. France realized that if she had more of us available to fight her battles, she could soon gain control of the entire world. To this end she established this great African country of ours, believing at the time that the people of this great land would always remain subject to her rule and would always be at her call to aid her against the world.

"In this she was partly right. If she could always control the colonies of black peoples, she could defy any nation on the earth."

The speaker paused, then continued, with a smile of satisfaction, "But France overlooked the fact that France herself, as a white race was dying gradually. She overlooked too, to what great extent the black

races had mingled with the white French, with its self-evident result.

"Today, the African and the Asiatic races rule the world, thanks to the one-time French and the English.

"We two colored races, that is the black and yellow races, are the only ones on earth that amount to anything. We are the mighty ones of the earth today and none dare interfere or disturb us.

"When France realized that the tables were being turned against her, and that she was sure to be the loser, she tried to avert the impending disaster to France, by attempting to make this great country a barren waste of sand once more. But it was too late. Too late for France to undo the great wrong she had done the white races of the earth. We were already strong enough to resist any such action on her part. Rising up in our might, much to their surprise, we overthrew our masters and became a nation independent and free from the yoke that had rested on our necks for so many years.

"From that time on the white French disappeared still faster from the face of the earth. Our histories tell us that in the course of the two following generations there were no more white French in France.

"These colored people you now see here are to a great extent the descendants of the French. In

other words they are the result of the mingling of the white and the black, with the black, as you see, predominating."

"But how was it that the black races prospered so?" Carl interrupted. Things were not quite clear to him, as yet.

The answer came quickly—"You know from your histories that the white races, from the beginning of time, have been warring upon each other. You know too, that the colored races have never fought each other as have the whites. That is the answer.

"England aided the growth of the yellow race by letting Japan overrun Russia. France conscripted the black race to fight the white. What other outcome was there to expect? Sooner or later the two races must dominate. When the black and yellow races are allowed to kill off the white, there could be no other result.

"And, because that result was inevitable, so it has come to pass. Today where are the whites? Scattered over the earth! But they are nobody. Their ambition lies dormant; they are even too lazy to procure their food. They are a dying race.

"But we colored people are different. We are the civilized peoples of the earth. Our civilization has taken the place of that of the white peoples some two thousand years ago."

The truth became clear to Carl and Sana as they listened to the speaker's words. The hypocrisy of nations, like that of individuals, ends with disaster.

Asking whether all these great changes had been wrought in a natural way, Carl was told "Not quite so. At the time when the Sahara, as it was then known, was changed from a desert into a flowering garden, there was, according to history, a great astronomical upheaval, destroying great cities, and killing millions of people. Ever since, the "great comet," which will soon be visible in the sky, has appeared daily. Then our colored people with the mixture of the French blood get excited. They can not lose their fear."

Sana smiled, saying, "After two thousand years they are still excited and afraid."

In the days that followed Carl and Sana, in their wanderings about this strange country, were soon convinced of the truth of the things they had been told. Much as they would have liked to remain here and study the civilization and people about them, they desired to hasten to America. Of Sana's homestead on the Gurara Oasis there was nothing to be seen. Ages ago all that was dear to Sana had been buried deep beneath the waves of the great inland sea.

So getting once more into the "Meteor" they set out for Carl's beloved country.

America, too, had changed, Carl found to his great regret, when the "Meteor" alighted at the site of what was once the world's greatest city. Gone were the towering buildings of New York, gone were its millions of people. In its place was naught but a great sandy plain, or better, a plateau, extending for miles in all directions, and unpeopled save for a few straggling groups of rude hut-like shelters.

In landing the "Meteor" had come to a step at a point that Carl figured was approximately lower Broadway. Nearby some excavating work was being done by a group of white-bearded men, who at the sight of the airplane dropped their implements and came hurrying towards it. Upon questioning these men Carl learned that they were scientists who had come from the cities that lay in the distant West, to learn something about the civilization that had existed on the Atlantic coast in the days of the past.

To the best of their knowledge, they explained, some thousand or so years ago the entire coast had been devastated by great tidal waves, followed by terrible earthquakes causing untold destruction. Volcanic eruptions, too, had added to the havoc, burying the lands, for thousands of square miles, under millions of tons of lava and rock.

Leading him to the pit where Carl had first seen them, the excavators asked him to peer down the deep shaft they had dug. At the bottom, some two hundred feet below him, Carl saw the tower of the great Woolworth Building of old New York.

Asking them what they sought, the answer came, "Knowledge. We of today have little need for the material things of Life. Ours is a search for the Truth, and we must hurry."

The spokesman of the party pointed heavenward. Carl, following the directing finger with his eyes, saw in blazing brilliance, the great comet whose first appearance had caused Sana and he to flee the earth. While in Europe he had noticed it, but had paid little attention to it, being too absorbed in the things around him. The peoples of Europe, too, had taken it as an accepted thing of life.

The stranger continued, "That has been there in the heavens as long as man can remember, but we who know, realize that it is coming closer and closer to the earth. Just when that final rush will come, the rush that shall bring destruction to this world, we do not know, but we fear that the day is not far off. For myself I care not. The day can come anytime and I will be ready. For the sake of the truths we are seeking, however, I hope that that day will never come."

A strange world indeed, mused Carl, when the knowledge of truth dominates and man's personal ambitions are secondary!

Wandering around Carl and Sana saw how complete the destruction had been. The wonderful Palisades of the Hudson had disappeared, the river itself having been turned from its bed many miles away. The East River, too, was gone, having been filled with lava and rock as had a great part of Long Island Sound.

While on one of their wonder-filled trips of exploration, they came upon an extinct volcanic crater, very similar in size and appearance to some they had seen on the moon. The air, that day, seemed more oppressive than usual and the heat terrific.

Seeking coolness in the shadow of a great boulder on the rampart of this crater, Sana sat down, her baby in her arms, while Carl stood nearby studying the wonderful formations of rock and lava at every hand.

Suddenly the air was filled with a great roaring sound, a sound so terrific that it was deafening. A light, brighter than that of a hundred suns, illumined the earth. With a rush the realization was upon them. The comet was fast approaching the earth —the end of the world was at hand.

Then the collision—the earth shook under the

impact—the air was filled with dust and smoke. Fearful for the safety of his beloved ones, Carl sprang to them, to clutch them tightly in his arms. Then darkness!

. . . . . .

Someone laughing? Carl opened his eyes. Of course they were laughing at him, lying at the feet of his camel, from whose back he had fallen in his sleep, with his arms tightly hugging the camel's legs.

CHAPTER XI

UNDER THE KNIFE

CARL, endeavoring to get to his feet, was aware of a severe pain in his side. His left foot, too, pained him and was unable to support any weight. Struggling at last to an upright position, he staggered forward a few steps, only to lurch head first into the burning desert sand. Immediately the other tourists were off their camels and at his side. A hasty examination proved that his left ankle was badly broken and that, from all appearances, he had suffered internal injuries in his fall from the camel.

Everything possible was done to relieve his pain and make him as comfortable as possible. With great care he was literally hoisted aboard one of the camels, and strapped on its back, where he was held secure from a further fall by one of the guides who rode behind him.

The place of Carl's accident was near the Wadi Draa River, flowing past the southern end of the Atlas Mountains, so they were still some two hun-

dred and fifty miles, about four days' ride from Mogador, the terminus of the caravan.

Accordingly the caravan headed for the nearest town, Glisscim, but here they found only a native doctor, to whose care none was willing to entrust the sick man. Securing an automobile, the only one to be had and a ramshackle bouncing affair at that, Carl was driven to Mogador. Here, too, disappointment was in store for him. Suffering although he was from the pain in his side and ankle, Carl would not consent to gamble his chances on the more or less speculative knowledge of the only doctor in that locality.

Another hundred miles of pain-tortured automobile ride and he reached Marrakesh, the beautiful southern capital of Morocco, lying at the foot of the Atlas Mountains, whose snow covered peaks provided a wondrous contrast to the great groves of palms that formed a background for the city. It was at Marrakesh that the celebrated feudal chieftain of the southern country, El Hadj Thami Glaouri, made his home, being attracted to the city by its great groves of cypress and olive trees and its wonderful gardens of tropical beauty.

At the hospital, Carl, much to his delighted surprise, was placed under the care of the prominent French physician Dr. Thuillier. After a thorough

examination, which confirmed the belief of the tourists, Carl was placed in bed. The hospital was rather crowded with soldiers wounded in the war, but room was found for him in one of the wards.

That was on a Thursday night. The following morning X-ray pictures were taken to ascertain the true nature of the fracture in his leg, and Friday not being an operating day, but a "meatless one," as was laughingly explained to him, Carl had to wait for "butcher day," which was Saturday, for the operation.

Among the nurses at the hospital there were a few white women, one of whom, Carl soon learned, was an American, Grace Huntington. She came from New York, where she had been employed as a stenographer and secretary prior to the outbreak of the war. When the war came she went to France as a nurse, like so many of her American sisters. During her service with the armies she had met Dr. Thuillier, who had accompanied a regiment of semi-savage Moroccan soldiers to France. He, seeing that she made a wonderful nurse, made her an attractive offer, which, in her enthusiasm, she readily accepted, going to Marrakesh at the termination of her work in France.

Grace was young and very attractive, as Carl soon noticed. Carl was attractive, too, it seemed, as from

the outset complaints were made that she paid more attention to him than was necessary.

Carl was much interested in the sights about him, and particularly in the behavior of several men, who, still under the influence of the ether, were brought back to the ward from the operating room. One of these was a young Englishman who, coming out of the ether became very restless and talkative. So restless was he that two nurses had to hold him down, but all the while he kept talking of and to his sweetheart. This made Carl wonder whether he, when coming back from the plane of unconsciousness, would talk of Sana, his beloved, for whom his heart was crying bitterly. He hoped not, after hearing the jeers that greeted the words of the soldier. Furthermore, he could not reconcile himself to the thought of having Grace hear anything of Sana. But he reasoned to himself, that if what he had heard from others was true, he would talk. Much of this talking on the part of a patient he had been told was induced by suggestion on the part of the nurses at hand.

Friday night, much to his embarrassment, he was shaved and prepared for the operation the following morning. Grace, he noticed, was also visibly embarrassed, although he thought this strange, as it must have been a usual occurrence in the line of

duty. He could not account for it, but he was too tired and hungry to bother much about her feelings toward him. Hungry he was, and much to his chagrin had to be satisfied with half a roll and a glass of water.

Early the next morning Grace again came to his side to make him ready for the ordeal. Another coat of iodine, "war paint" she called it, was applied to his side, a white woolen shirt and a pair of long woolen stockings put on him and he was placed upon a wheel stretcher. Blankets were put over him with his arms beneath them, and his body tightened down with two strong belts. A victim, trussed for the slaughter, Carl mused bitterly.

In the operating room Carl was turned over to three women nurses; the history of his case being given them. Without further ado he was transferred to the operating table.

A young French doctor was attending to the ether apparatus while a nurse came up to Carl with a book in her hand and requested his signature. Asking what this meant, he was told that it was but a matter of routine. Anticipating that he was expected to sign his life away before the operation, in case he died from it, the nurse confirmed his belief. Reluctantly Carl signed the book, knowing that he had no alternative.

The doctor was having some trouble with the ether bottles and the attachment of the gas mask. While fixing things, he laughingly told a story of two boys, who were bragging about their fathers—the one had said that his father had electricity in his hair to which the other retorted that his father had gas on his stomach.

Disgusted beyond words at this lack of consideration on the doctor's part for his patient, Carl heard him say, "Come, you had better take some gas now."

The mask was adjusted over his face and the ether turned on. A sweet sickening odor entered Carl's nostrils followed by a light headed feeling. The stuff was doing its work fast. Making up his mind that he would not say a word of Sana, when coming out of the ether, he began to count. The possibility of his never coming out of it did not occur to him. He had reached the count of nine when sparks of all colors and shades, radiated from his brain, with a tremendous noise, to all corners of the room and beyond. They were like sparks from a huge induction coil of a wireless station. The count was thirteen when Carl suddenly exclaimed, "Oh no—I am not in an electric chair!"

Through his mind ran the argument he had so often propounded to the men of his profession. He was firmly convinced a person electrocuted in an

electric chair, was not dead and that he could be revived with a high frequency apparatus. Many an electrical equipment operator has been successfully revived after receiving equally as heavy or even more powerful electrical shocks from high tension apparatus in electrical central stations. These operators lay on the ground as though really dead: their hearts do not beat and any doctor would pronounce them dead; yet many of them are brought to life again.

After official electrocutions an autopsy is performed upon the body, and the heart removed. This, of course, kills the person, but the electrical shocks do not necessarily kill.

No state, he had contended, making use of the barbaric electrocution, would dare to apply high frequency apparatus to a criminal after he had been removed from the electric chair. It would expose the fact that many an individual had not been legally and according to law, executed in the electric chair.

When Carl stopped counting the doctor asked him "Do you hear me?"

Carl wanted to reply in the affirmative, but his voice failed him. So he nodded his head in answer to the query.

The young physician promptly exclaimed, "Hell you do!"

Carl meekly thought, "I ought to know better."

He now heard Dr. Thuillier, the chief surgeon, say, "Well, where is that young American?"

Then someone placed a hand on his left arm and he became unconscious instantly. From that time on, until three hours later, he knew nothing of what was happening to him.

Besides the doctors and nurses participating in the operation, there were several other doctors or internes present to study the case. To these, Dr Thuillier explained the nature of the accidental injury and the method of operating. The work was quite complicated because of the delay that had ensued since the time of the accident. At the end of an hour, however, Carl was wheeled back to the ward and put to bed, with Nurse Grace to watch over him until he came out of the ether.

While still under the ether, Carl dreamed that he had at last perfected an invention on which he had been working for years. This invention was the one thing that could be acclaimed as one hundred per cent perfect. His long cherished dreams had come true! He had devised an apparatus by means of which he could throw upon a screen scenes from any part of the globe, that is, the actual scenes

of happenings as they were taking place at some distant point the very moment we projected them upon the screen in front of his machine. Incidents taking place thousands of miles away were pictured before one's eyes as if they were at the scene itself. If he wanted a street scene say of San Francisco, Tokio, Paris or London, all he would have to do would be to place the indicator upon the dial map, pointing to the city in question, and it was done—the scene was before his eyes.

Carl had been industriously working on this telephoto device during the war. His idea was to observe the movement of the armies, believing that with it he could end the war and prevent all future wars. No military movement would be secret, no advance unobserved, with his machine.

The idea was first born in his mind after a talk with a great detective who was looking for evidence against some suspected criminals. Carl had come to the detective's aid with a device whereby he could see what was going on in a closed room. He placed wires along the picture molding of the room, during the suspected one's absence, and the four ends of the wire he provided with "eyes," his secret invention. These wires led from the room to a place at some distance away, where the apparatus reflected the entire room upon a large mirror.

This device he had improved upon until at last, instead of wires and the "eyes" he had been able to accomplish the same result by means of wireless.

The war over, he continued his experiments on the device, intending to use it in connection with his lectures on city planning.

In his delirium, he was addressing a large audience and demonstrating his device. He pointed the indicator to Paris, saying, "Here we have a city, where Baron Hausmann, under the great Napoleon, remodeled the entire city, broke through new thoroughfares, made plazas and squares, at an expense of some two hundred and thirty million dollars. The scene before you is that of the Place du Chatelet, with the monument at the end of the bridge, or rather beyond the bridge, acting as a focal point. Note the good treatment of the traffic waterway, the well planned boulevards, the uniform height of the buildings as well as the ornamental shade trees on both sides of all streets. Surely, here are examples for our American cities."

Turning the indicator upon Duesseldorf, one of the foremost cities, where the art of city planning has been practised for generations, Carl said, "Here is the river promenade on the Rhine in Duesseldorf. Where can we find in our own country a similar scene of such civic improvement? At the lower

level you see the electric unloading machinery and the busy vehicles hauling away the freight of the river boats. On the upper level in the wide promenade, flanked on one side with shade trees and on the other with the great balustrade, giving an open view of the river and the monumental bridge in the distance. Observe, also, the highly ornamental electroliers. Duesseldorf is no larger than Jersey City, but who ever goes to Jersey City for the sake of seeing anything beautiful. Where could we, in our own country, find such a scene, as this, of business and pleasure combined. Yet all this could be duplicated in America if the principle were but understood. As will be seen, city planning develops artistic taste, civic pride and patriotism. It also makes for better citizenship, adds to our comfort and our happiness and it stimulates industrial prosperity.

"Of late we have heard so much of Tut-Ankh-Amen, one of the great Pharaohs. Let us see if we can locate him." Shifting the indicator back and forth over the map of Egypt, Carl continued, "Here we have the sand waves sweeping in their slow but inevitable march past the silent Sphinx and the pyramids at Luxor. Yes, here it is. We see before us the last resting-place of a great Pharaoh, which for some 3400 years has remained undisturbed.

But now it has been entered and its valuable treasures taken away by a group of archeologists.

"Witness the procession of visitors in carriages and on camel's back, all come to gape with awe at the funeral fittings of a king. We cannot look down into the tomb itself, but we can see the valuable treasures as they are carefully carried away on stretchers borne by native Egyptians who apparently have no scruples against despoiling the grave of a ruler of their country.

"We see here treasure chests, costly vases, chairs, thrones and the like, as well as the mummy of the king. Art as well as history may gain to a great extent, but let us consider a while. Is it right?

"Tut-Ankh-Amen, as well as the other Pharaohs, was buried according to the rites of the religion of Egypt. In his mortal life he had this great tomb prepared, so that his body could be placed in it, when death came, and remain untouched through the ages. After the king had been buried and the last seal put in place, the tomb became consecrated ground, hallowed to the memory of the life that had departed. Because of this, many a logical mind will consider the ruthless digging up of the remains a ghoulish act and a desecration of the body's last resting-place. Surely if it were the grave of a less notable person than an ancient Pharaoh such would be the descrip-

tion of the act and the diggers would be called 'ghouls' and 'grave robbers' instead of archeologists.

"What would be said if some wealthy or more powerful foreign nation came to our own country to carry away the bodies of our great Washington or Lincoln, or say of some of our soldiers who lost their lives on the field of battle?

"It may be said that the removal of these highly valuable treasures will serve mankind, but mankind could be better served if the cost of such removal were used in the aiding of needy peoples.

"Beneath Constantinople, the Turkish capital, are buried the treasures of the old Pashas, and this is one of the reasons that makes both England and Russia so anxious to control that city.

"The treasures buried with Kings, Pashas or Pharaohs were buried in accordance with the beliefs of the people, and no other nation, especially a nation of a different religion, should have the right to exploit these graves and treasures to their own advantage.

"However, that is but a matter of opinion and has nothing to do with my new invention, the telephoto device, which has enabled you to see these things for yourselves."

Tremendous applause greeted Carl as he finished

his lecture. Immensely elated, he shouted, "I am satisfied. I have a machine that is one hundred per cent. perfect."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when a great seven-league boot kicked him off the globe, while a voice said, "The hell you have!"

Falling through space he looked back and saw another man, a young fellow he had seen in his audience, pick up the machine saying, "Here we have it, one hundred per cent. perfect."

And again came the gigantic boot and the voice, "The hell you have!" and he, too, slid off the planet.

A second man, one of the type termed "nut" came along and seeing the device, called out gleefully, "Years ago I invented this, but could not make it work. Now I shall claim it mine."

And again that sneering "The hell you will!" followed by so forceful a kick that the old man flew in a wide arc over Carl's head and descended rapidly to the depths beneath.

All the while Carl noticed that it was becoming hotter and hotter. At first he could not grasp the meaning of it, but then came the dawning of the truth that Hades was his destination. He turned around and screamed, "What is all this about?"

From somewhere in the far distance, he heard a

deep even voice respond, "Young man, if everybody should come into the possession of one hundred per cent. perfection, which by the way is an impossibility, there would be no incentive for improvement, and that would stagnate all possible progress."

Carl became intensely hot and was perspiring dreadfully. His very vitals were burning and a terrible thirst was consuming him, but he managed to say, "But I have it and I am going to hold on to it!"

A hand was on his arm, and a melancholy yet sweet voice barely audible came to him, saying, "Please, Mr. Lohman, have a drink."

Carl was but half awake, his mind still floating in airy regions, but he managed to rouse himself, and opening his eyes, he saw his charming nurse, Grace, standing at the side of his bed.

A teaspoonful of warm water was poured between his parched lips. That was all he could have just then, but to the fevered man it was nectar of the gods.

Carl, on regaining full consciousness was anxious to know whether he had said anything of Sana during his coma. He questioned nurse Grace guardedly, but was told that he had only grunted like a little pig for a time and then had mechanically delivered a lecture on the tombs of the Pharaohs.

Satisfied, Carl dosed off into a fitful sleep, to be

awakened some hours later, by plaintive strains of music. Twisting his head in the direction from which the sounds came, Carl beheld three musicians standing at the entrance of the ward. He recalled then, of having heard that they came every Saturday evening to play to the suffering patients.

Upon the strangely stirred spirit of Carl, the magic of this weird native music had a subtle effect, and burying his face in the pillow, he wept bitterly, weeping only as a strong man can weep.

That night no sleep would come to his tired eyes. The pain in his side had increased much to his alarm. Speaking of it to the night nurse, she gave him an injection, but it had little effect. Through the long hours of the silent night he lay staring with unseeing eyes at the ceiling above him.

The whole of the next day Carl received no nourishment save a glass of lemon water, although food was promised him the following day. That night another injection of morphine was given him, and peaceful sleep came to the tired man.

One hospital day was like another. But on the sixth day Carl became very ill. His pulse raced and his temperature rose rapidly. A high fever set in, torturing his very soul.

Carl noted that the night nurse had spoken to Grace of his condition when she arrived in the morn-

ing. Her serious face, when asking him how he felt, worried Carl greatly. He began to ponder on the success of the operation. Was it likely to end fatally? But then he did not care. Sana was gone, burned alive, and in a large measure due to his own fault. Ever since that fateful hour he had been thinking of how he could have saved his beloved if he had only acted the part of the hero; the hero of story book and screen. He had saved Sana from the clutches of Amshied and he blamed himself for not having taken sufficient precautions when leaving the burning building. As yet he did not know how he had been put out of action—all he remembered was the blow that sent him reeling down in a heap.

Such thoughts depressed him, and he cared little whether he lived or not.

Although puzzled at this turn of affairs, Grace assured him that he was in no great danger. Two assistant doctors, in the absence of the head doctor, were called, but they could not say just what was the matter. When Dr. Thuillier came, however, a hasty examination was all that was necessary to disclose the nature of the trouble. An abscess had formed in the wound, and it was necessary to reopen it. This was immediately done, the abscess removed, and the incision closed.

After this second operation Carl's fever left him and he was much easier.

For three long weeks after that Carl remained at the hospital, gaining in strength slowly but surely. During this time Grace was constantly at his side, tenderly nursing him with all possible skill and patience.

At last came the day when he was pronounced fit to leave. During the weeks of his convalescence, Grace had often told him of her desire to return to New York—she was tired of the desert, of the hospital, of everything in this foreign land. She wanted to go home. So it had been mutually agreed that they would go home together.

So together, Carl and Grace, bade goodbye to their friends at Marakesh and left for Mogador, where they hoped to find passage by steamer to New York.

CHAPTER XII

THE RUM RUNNERS

CARL and Grace had luck in catching the boat. Sailings from Mogador are few and far between, but the English freight steamer "Resolute" was at the wharf, loading for a return trip to New York. Inquiring of the vessel's master as to the chances of securing passage, Carl was directed to the purser's office, where he made arrangements for himself and Grace. Besides themselves, three other passengers had been booked for the trip.

Shortly afterward the steamer weighed anchor, and Grace and Carl, standing at the rail, waved farewell to the shores of Africa.

Carl soon made friends with the other men passengers, and much to his amazement, soon discovered that the "Resolute" was a rum boat, operated by a New York bootlegging gang. Captain Billings and the first and second officers, he learned, were in the pay of this gang and were known to be ruthless in their methods of dealing with any member of the crew who saw fit to disagree with them. Billings

was an American, who prior to taking up this calling, had been master of a Gloucester fishing schooner. Although legally without right to take charge of a steamer of the size of the "Resolute," he had been given papers by the English concern, which, to all appearances, operated the steamer as a freight boat, but which, in truth, was but a subsidiary of the rum running organization.

He learned, too, that the vessel had stowed away in its holds, some ninety thousand gallons of whisky and brandy, with a value of perhaps seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This liquor had been taken aboard at Cadiz, in Spain, to which port it had been originally shipped from England and France. From Cadiz the ship had gone to Mogador, which was listed as one of its ports of call, to take on a miscellaneous cargo. This, Carl was assured, was but another step in the concealing of the true nature of the steamer's operations.

Carl was told that if trouble arose he must not be surprised. Out of Cadiz, the crew had mutinied, but were subdued by Billings and his gunmen, who even now were somewhere on board the boat, ready at an instant's notice to quell whatever disturbance might arise. At Mogador, the crew had deserted the vessel, and a new one engaged from the riffraff of the wharves.

Naturally, Carl had many doubts as to the truth of his informant's statements, but these doubts were driven from his mind the following morning. He had been awakened by loud voices and general uproar. Upon investigating, he found that the crew had discovered the true nature of the cargo, and had demanded more pay. Their demands being refused, they had tried to persuade Billings to put back for Mogador. In this, too, they failed.

Then they had tried more direct action to obtain their "just rights" as they called them. But, to their chagrin, the four gunmen, of whom Carl had heard, were upon them, with threats of gun play if they did not go aft. The men could not resist now and were willing to cry "quits!"

Billings, however, wished to set his new crew an example, so three of the men, at his command, were clamped into irons and made prisoners below deck.

Then to show the men that he could play square with them, although everyone doubted it, he promised the crew a bonus at the end of the voyage and plenty of whisky during it.

From that time on, Carl and the rest of the passengers were wise in staying within the confines of the passenger deck. The crew was literally drunk at all times. How they managed to do their work was a mystery to Carl.

The slow tedious passage to New York was quite uneventful after the uprising had been taken care of, with the exception of the storm they encountered the fifth day out. Early that morning a gale sprang up, increasing in velocity until, by noon, it was a roaring hurricane. The "Resolute" was slowed down to almost a standstill, her engines running just enough to keep her head on to the wind. During the storm, which lasted over fifteen hours, the decks were continually swept with great waves, which tore away rafts and boat, broke ports twenty feet above the water line and flooded the staterooms. One of the passengers ventured out on deck during the storm and was picked up with a broken leg, having been thrown heavily against the cabin walls by a great mass of water.

The crew sobered up considerably during the storm, while the three men in irons were willing to promise anything if they were released.

Some seventeen days later, Carl was told that they were nearing New York. Long before reaching port, however, wireless messages were sent out to the effect that the ship had developed some slight boiler troubles, at the same time giving her location, but adding that no assistance was needed. Knowing that there was nothing wrong below decks, Carl figured that this was but a code message intended for

the bootleggers, who were awaiting the arrival of the vessel.

When the ship was about ten miles from New York, Captain Billings gave the command to cast anchor. At nine o'clock sharp that evening, a red rocket was sent up. Within half an hour, an auxiliary schooner, the "Viking," commanded by a former Customs guard, was lying alongside the "Resolute." Under the direction of the Captain and the watchful eyes of the gunmen the crew was immediately set to discharging the treasure of liquor.

This work kept the men busy the entire night. Early the next morning two fast motorboats came up and drew alongside the steamer. The men boarded the "Resolute" and with the aid of the latter's crew a large number of cases of whisky were put on board the motorboats, which then sped away.

Hardly had they departed with their treasure, however, when one of the motorboats was stopped by a large powerboat. This took place near enough to the "Resolute" to enable Carl to read its name—"Buzzard." The crew of this latter boat was heavily armed, and resistance being useless, the cases were transferred from the smaller boat to the "Buzzard," which Carl now recognized as one of the much spoken of pirate outfits gotten up to terrorize other rum-running vessels. The commander

of this vessel no doubt had an understanding with Captain Billings so that the latter's employers, the New York bootlegging gang, would be cheated out of the liquor as well as the price the rum-runners had paid for it.

The other motorboat, as well as the schooner "Viking" got away, but the "Resolute" was picked up by a Government dry navy patrol boat. This patrol had been on the lookout for a fleet of five English rum-laden vessels, some twenty miles out at sea off Fire Island. These English ships were supposed to be the mother ships of the rum-runners. The patrols had been given orders to board and capture the English vessels at high sea in order to test out a custom house ruling to the effect that the Federal authorities had the right to seize and search beyond the three mile limit.

A comparatively small quantity of liquor was found on board, but a list was found of the foremost New York hotel managers, evidently bootleg customers. The vessel and cargo, as well as some three hundred thousand dollars in gold, found in an iron chest was seized by the authorities and taken to New York, where the officers and crew were confined to jail. At the court hearing the next morning, the Captain explained, "I delivered the liquor on the high seas and not within the jurisdiction of the

United States Government. The liquor still on the ship is bound for Bermuda and not for your country. I was at the wheel and when the prohibition boat came along I took it for a pirate ship. Even when I heard the voice through the megaphone, 'Heave to, we are Revenue men,' I thought they were pirates and at first I intended ramming their ship. On second thought I demanded that they turn their searchlight on their flag and crew. When this was done I could see that they were indeed Revenue men and I was glad to have them come aboard a British boat outside the three mile limit."

The judge questioned Billings as to how he had come into possession of so large an amount of gold and was informed that it was customary for rum-running captains to demand gold, because of the large amount of counterfeit money the bootleggers had succeeded in passing in payment of the liquors.

However, the prisoners were soon released. After a visit from the British Ambassador, the wheels of official Washington began turning and it was ruled that the three mile limit must be observed in the search of foreign vessels. The pressure brought to bear probably did not have "the freedom of the seas" so much in mind as the fact that three miles from shore meant easier work for the rum-runners in their efforts to land the contraband.

In the meantime Carl had landed and re-established himself in New York.

The accounts in the newspapers as to the seizing of the "Resolute" were amusing to him owing to the way facts appeared to have been juggled. He related his story at the club that night to several of his friends. One of them, a Doctor Rowland, was rather surprised and proceeded to tell his side of the story.

"My chauffeur, John, was arrested last night by a dry agent, while he had twenty cases of brandy in his car, which came from the 'Resolute.' He had gotten the liquor at an East River dock, from a motorboat, the crew of which was dispensing the liquor to a number of customers who had paid for protection. However, John's load was seized just as he was about to enter my garage. The cases were unloaded into a truck standing nearby and John was placed under arrest and ordered to accompany the agent to the police station. After they had ridden a block or so, they let him go. The joke of the whole affair was that John was arrested by a man undoubtedly posing as a dry agent. He might have been one—but how do we know? I inquired and learned that the seizure of the liquor had not been reported to the authorities. So I am the loser, to the extent of two thousand dollars."

The two men enjoyed a hearty laugh as Doctor Rowland continued, "Last month, our friend White's chauffeur was held up by two gunmen just as he was leaving the dock with a load of liquor in the evening. You know certain policemen are tipped off to stay away from that particular section for an hour or two on certain nights. The gunmen jumped into his car and pointing their revolvers at him, forced him to drive past an empty lot. When there he was kicked out and the thieves drove off with the car, liquor and all. White found the car standing in front of his home the next morning.

"There is no questioning the fact that certain men accept bribes to have the booze removed from the boats, then put the holdup gang on to the trick, for a consideration, and still further benefit probably by dividing the booty itself. Just plain double-crossing.

"Last week the Federal grand jury censured several dry agents for taking large quantities of liquor out of government warehouses where it had been stored after seizure. These agents, however, claimed that they did not sell the stuff, but gave it away to their friends and relatives. Who wants to believe them?

"There are all kinds and forms of rum-selling going on and the men engaged in it make big and easy

money. I understand that a certain party here in New York bought several yachts and is sailing them between New York and nearby English possessions, engaged in the bootlegging business. His yachts keep outside of the three mile limit where the rum-runners meet them with hard cash. He is making a lot of money and is running no risk. Once the stuff is on land there is no lack of buyers. And some way is always found to supply their wants. In fact a friend of mine told me that in one of our boroughs whisky is distributed from oil delivery wagons in the conventional oil cans. These wagons have regular routes, calling on their established customers once a week."

"Look here," said Carl, "you are a good writer; why don't you write a story about these pirates, the double dealing crooks and dishonest dry agents. It would make corking good reading and the people would see that our country, after all, is not as dry as the Sahara."

"No, thank you. I don't want to be a 'marked man.' You know they would get me in the long run, even if they had to 'frame me' and 'frame me' they would. You, as every one else who wishes to, know too well the custom in this respect. And if they did 'frame me,' they would have so very little respect for decency and honor that they would call me a

liar, even if I had made a sworn statement in advance that such would be the case."

"Yes, thinking it over," said Carl, "it seems best that we raise no objection to their crooked business and simply pretend that we know nothing about it."

"But it is a fine state of affairs when a law, such as the dry law, causes untold evils. It not only makes law and home breakers, but it makes liars and hypocrites. It causes children to disrespect their parents; it causes divorces and as the records show, it fills the jails more than ever. Doctors are against it, as it undermines health and in many a case death has been the result of the lack of alcoholic stimulant. Besides it costs the people more in the way of taxation to make up the losses in revenue which were formerly derived from breweries, saloons and distilleries. Now the balance has to be struck by taxing the dear public.

"While home brew is much in vogue, most of the stuff would kill an elephant. We are surely getting ourselves into a nice mess, even to the extent of getting into difficulties with foreign diplomats and their countries. And what is probably worst of all is the frightful use of deadly drugs and its disastrous consequences.

"There is no getting away from it. It under-

mines the morals and health, and how many murders have already been committed on account of it."

"It's a great life if you don't weaken." Carl laughed. "Yes, it's a great life if you don't weaken! But what becomes of the country? This may go on for some years, with conditions getting worse daily, while our dry advocates and agents will continue to tell us through the papers, and otherwise, that every day in every way the country is getting drier and drier.

"That they are deliberately distorting the truth of the situation and quoting figures and so-called facts, which they themselves do not believe, will not deter them in their efforts to make the people like it. That is their big job—make the people like the medicine the quacks prescribed for them.

"One of the surest indications of public opinion is the way politicians and candidates use the conditions as they now exist in their efforts to get into office. Prior to the going to the polls, these candidates appeal to the people's reason, or state of mind, as they call it—appeal to them to abolish the dry law; to regain the liberties they have lost. Oh, yes, these candidates, if elected, will restore those lost liberties! Oh, yes, they will—not. But the people fall for it—and that helps, from a political point of view.

"As you have, of course, found out through your own observations, these pre-election promises are never kept. After election, promises are memories only—and then often only in the minds of the people who elected that particular candidate to office. He immediately even discards the memory of his promises.

"From the voter's point of view the outcome is to be regretted, as is true of many other issues that arise from time to time. But it shows the sentiment of the people. If they were for prohibition and the consequent results of such enforcement as we have had foisted upon us, office seekers would never dream of appealing to them as they do.

"But to get back to those who do preach prohibition, even if they do not practise it. Do you know, that many of these 'private' dry agents get big pay from wealthy individuals, who accumulated their wealth while the country was wet?"

"You mean to say," questioned Carl, "that individual contributions are made to make the country dry?"

"Of course. Where do you suppose these fanatics get the money with which to carry on their lecture tours and campaigns? They haven't any money of their own to speak of, and the government doesn't

pay them. The government has its own dry crusaders."

"Oh, I see," Carl resumed. "These private individuals are making a good living by advocating, for a price, the doctrine that it would be a good thing for the welfare of the people and the country, if they were deprived of a glass of beer or wine.

"I have no objection to the abolishing of strong drink—such as brandy and whisky, but it is idiotic hypocrisy to believe that a hundred million people should change their custom overnight. Did you ever think it over? If the customs of a nation can be changed overnight, at the command of a few, what sort of stuff must the people be made of?

"I can see where an individual here and there could give up voluntarily a customary indulgence for a short time, as we often do around New Year's, and then it is a matter of testing one's power of will, but it is beyond conception to believe that an entire nation can be dictated to, and made to abide by a law that makes it a crime to indulge in a glass of four per cent. beer when the day before it was within the law to consume one hundred proof."

"No, Carl, you haven't got that quite right!"

"And why not?"

"You can drink all you want, or rather, can get. All the liquor you, or any other wealthy and wise

man, may have stored away in your cellar is yours for the drinking. The law does not specify that you must not drink it. It is not criminal to try it, but it is illegal to sell or transport it to your home."

"That is idiotic!" shouted Carl.

"But it is a fact," came the retort.

"This would favor, no doubt, the well-to-do, who are well able to pay the price of replenishing their private stock."

"Of course. The poor devil cannot afford a cellar full. His stock at best, no doubt, is a flask on his hip—if he has the coin, and then he runs the risk of being arrested for having it on him. They could even take his trousers away from him, if they felt like living up to the very letter of the law. His trousers would be termed the vehicle of transportation.

"That is the one reason why so much home-brew is being made. Some of it would make a rabbit fight a bulldog, but the people want it—and they pay the price. As you know thousands have died drinking the stuff."

"Too bad. But what about our government which caused this law to be passed?"

"It is responsible for all this misery, for the lawlessness, that is seen on every hand. It is just as much responsible for such conditions as England was

when she forced upon China the use of drugs. You know, China did not want the drugs, so England warred upon her, with the result that millions of Chinamen have died from the use of the drugs.

"Then, too, for years the unscrupulous Chinamen, or his agents, sells the drug to the ever increasing American trade. It is stated that since our country became dry, more of the deadly drugs are used here than in all other countries of the world combined."

"And the government at Washington stands for that? Impossible!"

"But what can they do? The government tries to stop the smuggling of drugs into this country. But as the people want the drug, either because of the high cost of alcoholic stimulant, or the scarcity of it, they are forever devising new schemes for bringing it in, so that the government, while it does prevent the smuggling of some of it, is unable to prevent the drug from getting into the country. Once in the hands of the peddlers in this country it is an easy matter for it to be distributed among their customers.

"And not only are they supplying old hands at the game, but they are continually creating a new demand, by teaching the habits to others. Why, we read in the papers of school children and young girls barely out of their teens using drugs. Were con-

ditions the same before prohibition? No! You didn't hear of children getting drunk, and getting drunk is wearing a halo compared to taking dope.

"If half the money used in the enforcement of the dry law and the preaching of its propaganda was spent in an earnest effort to rid this country of the drug peril, there would be fewer jobs for keepers in insane asylums."

"Yes," agreed Carl, "you are right there. And thinking of it, it is not alone health that suffers from such an evil. The nation will suffer in the end. Look at China. Prior to the use of drugs, China was a great nation. Some of the most useful of the inventions of the ages have come from China. What is it as a nation? The use of drugs made it stagnant. Its culture died out and it ceased to be a factor in the progress of the world. I wonder if that was England's object when she forced drugs upon China. I understand, too, that in India, today, more drugs are consumed than prior to England's taking hold there."

"That may be so. You know a nation or a people can be better exploited when in such a condition."

"Well, let England do what it wants. The duty of each and every American, however, is to look out for the welfare of his country. He must remember that America comes first and should do everything

possible to keep the American people from being exploited either from within or without."

"Quite right. But what do we want to do? It is against the law to sell liquor, but not to drink it. Come into the locker room, I have a little left."

"Yes, it is a great life if you don't weaken."

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEADLY RIVAL

WHEN Carl reached his office, to take up once more his engineering work he found Grace already awaiting him, ready to take up her secretarial duties.

When Grace had first expressed the desire to return to New York, she confessed to a lack of funds. Carl, grateful for the tender care she had taken of him while he was ill at the hospital, offered to pay her passage to New York. This she consented to, with the stipulation that she be given work at his office where a weekly deduction could be made from her salary until the money he had advanced was repaid. It was with this understanding, then, that she accompanied Carl to New York.

Carl instructed her as to her duties, but did not notice that her eyes seemed to flash with an eager light and an avid gleam, such as the mere technique of the work could never have provoked. She seemed to bask in the favor of his presence and look; to wither and wilt when he withdrew from her gaze,

as a flower might do, if withdrawn from the light and the glow of the life-giving sun.

While his business mail had been attended to during his absence, quite a collection of personal mail awaited him. He was too busy for the moment to pay much attention to it and gave the envelopes but a passing glance, as if looking for something of especial interest or note. Not finding what he desired, the entire lot was set aside for more leisurely perusal.

During the homeward journey, he had laid plans for the irrigation of the Sahara, and with his assistant, in his private office, he discussed the making of these plans for a scientific irrigation system, to take the place of the French plan for flooding the Sahara by means of a canal from the ocean.

With this work thus auspiciously commenced, Carl was at liberty to give more careful consideration to his private matters, including that stack of mail. On second thought, however, he waited until the evening when the office force had left before he sat down to the task.

The contents of the letters were practically all alike, only that the meaning in each was differently expressed, some were clever, some witty, some downright dull. But Carl was used to that. Among them were invitations to affairs that were already numbered among the annals of the past and others of a

future time, which he made note of in anticipation of attending them, if circumstances permitted.

He had started his plans for the Sahara irrigating scheme, but with Sana gone there was not the same enthusiasm and initiative as there was prior to that fateful trip into the desert when they had been trapped by Amshied and when he had so utterly failed to play the hero, the rescuer of his beloved one. The spur was gone. Again, there came to him Sana's promise that she would give anything a woman could give to the man, who of course was Carl, who saved her homestead at the Gurara Oasis. But now she was dead and his desire to work on the Sahara plan was likewise dying.

He cursed the hour when Sana and he, on the pretense of requiring refreshments—while in reality it was Sana's desire to listen to the music, came to the spot destined to prove so fateful. And after all, it was but the monotonous tones issuing from the flute of a snake charmer.

The minute attention Grace paid Carl in her first week in the office, was not, in her mind, sufficiently reciprocated—so she thought, although she realized that she was but an employee. But had she not done her level best to bring him back to health, when he was lying prostrate in the hospital? That this was her duty as a nurse, did not occur to her. She loved

Carl and was determined to secure his love. In what way she secured it, did not matter to her. Well she knew that Carl in paying her passage home had unconsciously stepped into a trap, from which he would have difficulty in extricating himself once the meshes of the net had enfolded him. The Mann Act deals severely with any offender, whose offense comes within its provisions and Grace knew how easy it would be to lend color to the story of her passage home, even though it were an act of charity on Carl's part.

She did not care to entertain this thought, yet it occurred to her mind time and time again when Carl busily engaged appeared to be paying no attention to her. His seemed an iceberg attitude, which made her shiver. But she was ready to dig the flame out of the ice.

For some time Grace had become anxious, fearing that Carl knew or might come to know of the cablegram she had withheld from him. Yet, how could he learn of it? Did she not receive it early in the morning, just after she had unlocked the office and when she was entirely alone?

It was her duty to open the mail, telegrams and the like. Thus she reasoned she had done no wrong, insofar as reading the cablegram was concerned. But to withhold it from her employer, even though she

considered him more in the light of a friend and even though it came from a woman she felt to be her rival, equally if not more in love with Carl—was this not a wrong of a hideous kind? Was it not even branded with the name of crime?

BELOVED CARL. I AM HOME AGAIN. NOTHING SERIOUS HAPPENED. LETTER WILL FOLLOW. YOUR LOVING AND LONGING SANA.

These were the words that flashed across the mind of the guilty girl, whenever her eyes rested upon Carl. They seemed to be graven on her mind in letters of flame. To be near him in the taking of his dictation was one of the uncertain pleasures of her daily life. She knew that Carl had been deeply in love with Sana, but she knew too that he believed Sana was dead. At the same time that she feared, she also was angered by the fact that Carl's affection even now seemed to be inevitably riveted upon a thing which for him Death had long since claimed. She, Grace, was still young and comely, yet he passed her by in his worship at a shrine wherein the image lay crumbling to the dust. This thought alone caused the girl to pursue the course, which even to herself was no source of joy, but a hideous curse, and insidious menace that seemed to follow her as a shadow even on the brightest day and as a blight-

ing curse even in moments that should have given a small measure of joy and happiness.

To use the effect of the Mann Act as a stepping stone, to gain her desires often occurred to her, but, although she did not mind the notoriety attached to it she did not know how to go about it other than to openly accuse Carl. At this she balked. She would bide her time. He did not know Sana was alive and if she could help it, he would never know. And who could tell but what with the passing of the days Carl might turn to Grace for friendship.

The change in Grace became so obvious, that even Carl was forced to take notice of it, but he could not account for it.

Grace watched every incoming mail very closely, for the cablegram had stated, a letter would follow. That letter must never reach Carl, as that would mean the failure of all her plans. No amount of watching, no amount of worry, would be too great a price, Grace reasoned, to pay for the opportunity of getting that letter in her possession.

Then, at last, came the long watched-for missive!

There it lay on the desk before her, with its African stamp and postmark. The woman's hand with which it had been addressed spoke plainly that this letter was from Sana, Carl's true love.

What should she do with it? Should she play the

game squarely and place the letter on Carl's desk for him to read? The good in her made a vain effort to fight down the evil. She would keep it. Carl must not have it. No, a thousand times no!

All that day she kept the letter hidden at her bosom. How it seemed to burn her flesh one moment and freeze her very blood the next! It seemed to Grace that it would shriek out its message to the man from whom she was hiding it. But she did not falter in her evil purpose. Although heart sick and weary at the realization of her wrong, she clung to it with grim resolve.

At last the day, the longest she had ever lived, came to an end and she hurried home eager to read that letter, but weighed down with a nameless fear, with strange foreboding.

It was but the work of a moment to unseal the envelope over the steam of a kettle. With feverish haste, she drew out its contents, and read, half aloud, with halting words:

My Beloved Carl:

I am home again with my mother, whom I found before the charred cross you had erected over what you thought was my grave. Dear heart, I was overjoyed to hear that you were alive. I had thought that the savage cavemen had done their worst to you. When they carried me away, and later while lying in their cave I prayed to God to receive your soul with mercy. But now I am thanking Him for

having kept you alive. I can hardly believe it, darling.

The cavemen held the slave girl, Cintani and myself captives for several days, but Cintani, she is a clever one, managed to poison them, so that we escaped.

On our way home we came across de Rochelle, who was almost dead with thirst and fever. Perhaps I shouldn't have done it, but I gave him water and helped him to his feet. He came along with us to the site of the burned cabin where mother was praying for me. At the sight of me, she fainted dead away. You can well imagine the shock it would be.

De Rochelle has confessed that he set the place on fire, trying to help us, and that he followed the cavemen when they carried me off. This may be true, but I do not believe him. At any rate, he has promised to leave Timbuktoo as soon as he has sufficient strength to do so. So don't worry about him, dear.

"In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wild waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing
Which speaks to my spirit of thee."

I shall write you more in a day or two. At present I am worn out and still too much excited in the happiness and knowledge that my Carl is still among the living. With heaps of love and kisses,

Your Sana.

To this letter was pinned a short note to the effect that, because of incorrect address on the first envelope, the letter had been returned to her after some

seven weeks had passed, and that she had promptly readdressed it correctly and with the second sending had also dispatched a cablegram.

Grace said to herself, "Poor thing, writing a wrong address on a letter to her lover. However, it finally found its destination. Here it is! And the cablegram!"

As Grace read this loving message, her face grew livid and her eyes expanded and contracted in her rage. She rose up suddenly, exclaiming through quivering lips, "Why couldn't she have died, or that caveman taken her. Then I should not have to suffer now. Then she would have been out of my way."

For an hour she sat in the chair, where she had thrown herself in a fit of rage, torturing herself with cruel thoughts. But finally the madness died down, and the look of hatred was replaced by one of utmost depression and despair.

"What is the use? Sooner or later he will learn that his desert flame is still burning."

At this juncture, Grace rose and replaced the message within the envelope, sealing it carefully once more. Yes, it would be for the best if she turned it over to its rightful owner. With that thought in mind she sought the comfort of her pillows.

The next morning, however, the good resolution

of the night before had paled. Grace seized upon the letter and striking a match soon reduced Sana's message to a little heap of black fragments, saying with a bitter laugh "Here goes Carl's flame like the will-of-the-whisp, flitting over the ground in its misleading way, lasting but a little while."

But Grace could not alter the ways of Fate or Destiny! She might stave them off for the while, but all her plans and wiles could not prevent them from eventually rushing past her and on to the predestined goal.

The days rolled by and still Grace bore her grudge against Carl. In what strange actions love chooses to express itself! And yet—did not the great Alexander burn Persepolis, the Gem of the East, in order to satisfy the whim of Thaïs, the courtesan? Did not Antony lose the world to follow in the footsteps of her who fled in vain back to her lost empire—Cleopatra? Yes, these are the ways of love and strange ways they are.

Grace assumed an outward attitude that did not correspond with her feelings within. Whenever Carl addressed her she replied in a kindly, gracious tone, without hint of the madness that was eating away her soul. Carl appeared to be more business like and calculating than before. Often there were times when she longed to tell him her innermost feelings,

but she could not bring herself to the point of doing so.

And then Fate took a hand.

What had brought Carl to the office so early that morning? Why should he have been there in the outer office when the postman delivered a second letter from Sana? Grace asked herself these questions as reluctantly she passed the letter over to Carl. He took it mechanically and not recognizing Sana's writing, laid the missive aside for a few moments while he took up duties of greater importance to him than any personal letter possibly could be.

His evident non-recognition of the missive struck Grace rather forcibly as she watched him closely from her desk. No opportunity presented itself whereby she could secure this letter, and much to her chagrin she was obliged to watch Carl at last pick it up for reading.

He studied the stamp and the postmark, and as he did so became very restless, excitably so and with more than eager fingers he tore open the envelope. A small slip of paper fluttered to the floor. Eagerly he stooped to pick it up. Unfolding it his surprised eyes were confronted with—

HERE LIES MY BELOVED
SANA VON SECKT
REST IN PEACE
CARL

It was the note he had pinned to the charred cross on Sana's grave. His face grew pale, and scarcely able to control his emotions he seized the letter itself and unfolded it. As he did so he stared with eyes that could not believe what they saw. He turned at once to the signature and the pallor of his face changed and gradually brightened while the fearsome look in his eyes was changed to one of wonder and joy. He read, scarcely breathing the while:

My beloved Carl:

As I promised you, I am writing you more at length now that I am at ease. I trust that my cablegram and first letter found you in good health and spirits, dearest darling boy.

I soon recovered from the experience I had in the captivity of those strange cavemen, and my quick recovery I ascribe to the joy of knowing that you, my sweetheart, were not murdered in cold blood. I went to church and thanked God for the wonderful escape you had. The terrible agony I endured until I met my mother kneeling before the cross, praying for my soul, I can hardly describe. All that I care about now is that you are safe.

I shudder when I think of how that caveman struck you down with his club. You really had no chance. And with that same club, while I was prisoner, he tried to make love to me. It is hard for me to realize today that such a brutal man should have let me off so easily, but then I suppose I should thank Cintani for this. She poisoned the entire tribe, at least, so I think, as mentioned in my first letter. When we escaped that night I took a last

look at those cruel people and they were all lying silently on the ground—a veritable court of the dead.

After all, I believe cavemen to a certain extent are chivalrous to women. If it were not so, I would not be alive today. I would have taken the poison myself. You should have seen the way in which those women loved their mates—yet their affection is secured and held by the club. I wonder how it would be if you were king of the cavemen? But I suppose now that you are again in the company of the New York girls you no longer care for your "desert flower." Was it after all, but a Fata Morgana that we held in our arms while sitting on the beach? Write me, dear, as I have been so lonesome since you left. I feel as if I were standing alone on a huge sand wave in the great desert, not certain of my foundation.

But I do trust in you and I often thank our Lord that He sent you to me to save my life. How can I ever repay you? All I can give you is my devotion and love. Love is life. So come to my arms.

Cintani, the little slave girl, is staying at my home. I am so grateful to her. If it had not been for her pluck the chances are I should not now be writing this letter.

De Rochelle, as I wrote you, will shortly leave for France. My mother tells me he has recovered his strength although I have not seen him since my return.

He promised to stay away from me and so far he has kept good that promise. To think that he should have set Amshied's place on fire while you and I were there. He claims he did it to save me from Amshied, but this is probably on the same par with his desire to have me jump from the bridge.

I am enclosing herewith my tombstone inscription "Here Sana, rest in peace. . . ." As you now

know you certainly did exaggerate. It is seldom that one has the opportunity of reading the inscription on one's own gravemarker. But when I saw the grave you had made, I could not keep from crying. I want to tell you how I appreciate your kind manly spirit. You are just wonderful and I wish we were together now. But alas, I shall have to have patience.

With love and many kisses and regards from mother, yours as ever,

Sana.

Carl read the letter a second time. Then resting back in his arm chair he smiled. And yet the close observer might have perceived that his eyes were veiled with a slight mist—tears of joy that welled up from the soul.

Grace, who had been watching Carl closely, grew furious, so much so, that she ground her teeth and bit her lips until the blood appeared.

After Carl had again glanced over Sana's message, he placed it in his pocket and summoned Grace into his private office to take dictation. Grace rose unsteadily from her chair, believing that Carl would dictate a message to Sana. That she determined, she would not stand for. Then the thought flashed through her mind that Carl surely would not expect her to attend to his love affairs.

Carl commenced to dictate a business letter, but his mind was far from the subject. Repeatedly he

corrected himself and requested his secretary to read and re-read the notes which she had taken down. This mental disturbance in the usually fine poise of her employer could not go by Grace unnoticed. It served to anger her all the more to realize that his love for Sana had the power to drive all else from his mind and make him even oblivious to the duties of his office.

Grace had read the letter back to him for the fourth time when Carl, even in his confused mental state realized that there was neither sense nor reason in what he had dictated. So he decided to commence again. A new beginning was made but that was about all. At last with a thin and rather wan smile he gave it up for the time being, dismissing his secretary with the words "Never mind, just now. I will get the letter out before five. Don't fail to remind me of it."

A strange look had settled over Grace's countenance as she returned to her desk. A serious expression it was, born of the thought of the withheld cablegram and the purloined letter. She had suffered far more in proportion to her doings than the satisfaction she had derived from them.

Presently Carl entered her office and in a strangely calm voice asked, "Miss Huntington, do you know if there is another party in this building by the name

of Lohman? There was a cablegram and a letter that I should have received probably some ten days ago."

"I do not know," was her rather quickly spoken reply, and a flush that spread over her face, but without any apparent hesitation she went on with her work. Fortunately, Carl did not notice her embarrassment.

"It is very strange. I ought to be able to find out the particulars of delivery at the cable office. Would you be kind enough to drop in there on your way to lunch and inquire if they have any record for the last two weeks, or longer, of receiving and delivering a cablegram for me from Timbuktoo, Africa? You know, when they deliver a cablegram the receiver must sign for it."

"Yes, surely, with pleasure," came with difficulty from Grace's pale lips and then momentarily summoning courage, she added, "Were you expecting a cablegram?"

"No, but I received a letter in which it was stated that a cablegram had been sent."

"Was it an important message?"

"Yes—and no."

"Probably the sender confirmed the cable wording in the letter you received this morning."

Carl turned without an answer, as though he had

not heard this final remark and stepped into his own office.

Her heart beat high, and fearfully she racked her mind for some way out of the difficulty in which she now perceived she had gotten herself. It would never do to let Carl make any personal inquiries at the cable office since then most assuredly she would be detected in the game she had tried to play. Many plans and schemes came to her mind but upon consideration none appeared to answer her purpose. As she murmured to herself, "I may as well take the chance and pretend to have stopped there. He would never know the difference and I can easily report that no such cablegram had been received."

Her lunch hour having arrived she prepared to go out, and as she was putting on her hat, Carl happened to pass and gave a parting caution, "Now don't forget about that cable."

Her reply, "No I won't," was given in a rather strange tone and she was thankful that Carl did not appear to notice it. Hurriedly she left the office, her entire body atremble. She did not go near the cable office nor did she partake of her customary ice-cream soda lunch. The fear that rose up within her had robbed her of all desire to eat. Instead she walked the streets, thinking, thinking.

Returning to the office a little later than usual she

summoned her courage and at once went to Carl's private office.

In response to his eager and questioning look she said, "There has been no such message received for the past three months."

This she figured, certainly covered the period since Carl himself had left Timbuktoo, and continued, "I had them look over all the books and through all their files, and having done so, they were positive that no cable of any sort had been received for you from Timbuktoo or any other place in Africa. In fact, you did not receive any foreign messages since you returned from abroad."

Carl turned away in silence, not knowing what to make of it, but realizing all too well that the cable might have gone astray.

Grace stood silently, noting carefully Carl's every gesture and expression, as she awaited a reply. He dismissed her with apparently kindly spoken words, "All right, never mind it then."

As she left his office, she breathed much easier and a great burden seemed to have been lifted from her guilty soul. He suspected nothing!

A few minutes later however, Carl asked her for a cablegram blank and instead of dictating the message to her he wrote it out himself, and personally rang for a messenger.

When the messenger arrived, Grace, going to the door of Carl's office, said, "The boy is here Mr. Lohman, will you give me the cablegram?"

"Send the boy in here."

As the boy entered the office, Grace closed the door behind him, remaining close outside in an effort to hear what was said. But all she heard was "Charge it."

She went quickly to her desk and sat down as the boy came out and departed through the outer door. It occurred to her too late that she might have gone out into the hall and demanded the message from the boy and after having perused it, handed it back to him with no one the wiser as to her deception.

In her high strung and nervous state, her mind was not working as clearly as usual, or she surely would have realized that she could have gone to the cable office, at the end of the day, and for some plausible reason, such as having failed to retain a copy for the office file, procured a copy of the message.

Picking up her pencil and notebook she muttered sadly, "Out of luck this time," and entered Carl's office with the words "Mr. Lohman, you wished me to remind you of that letter you desired to dictate before the close of the day. Shall I take it now?"

"Ah yes, sit down and I will dictate at once."

And, greatly to the surprise and chagrin, of Grace, he, in the calmest manner imaginable, sat back in his chair and dictated the long business letter without a single halt or change. He was at ease, mentally and physically, in great contrast with his bewildered words of the morning.

It was the message he had sent to Sana that had relieved his spirit and restored him to his normal bearing.

It was Grace, who, if she had known the contents of that cablegram, would have trembled and been unfit to take the letter he was now dictating.

CHAPTER XIV

GETTING HIS IDEAL MATE

AFTER dinner that evening, Carl wrote a long letter to Sana, enclosing the gift he had purchased that afternoon. In higher spirits than at any time since that fateful morning on the desert he went to his club to spend the evening in quiet reverie.

In the days that followed, the change in Carl became more and more noticeable to Grace, who at last realized that all her hopes were now gone as the winds of yesterday. This realization was a bitter pill to swallow but she tried to make the best of it.

Weeks passed. Weeks that seemed ages to the anxious man but weeks that were as fleeting moments to the girl who dreaded the day when another letter should reach him from across the seas.

At last the letter came. Receiving it from the postman, Grace, without hesitation now, placed it on Carl's desk. What mattered it to her! But just the same her feelings were thrown out of balance

and with, "What's the use," she threw her notebook angrily on her desk just as Carl came in with his usual morning smile.

Grace made a brave attempt to appear unconcerned, saying, "Mr. Lohman, there is a letter on your desk from your African friend."

Carl hurried into his office and as he opened the envelope turned to Grace, asking, "How did you know it was from Sana?"

"Oh I thought so."

"Why, you did not know that she was alive. How did you guess it?"

"To be frank, when you received the letter from Timbuktoo and when you forwarded the cablegram, I thought something unusual must have happened. Isn't that so?" looking at her chief with a smile.

"Yes, you are right, Miss Huntington. I told you that Sana had been burned to death, but I was greatly mistaken. Sana is alive."

"I am glad to hear it," came the lying response.

Carl was reading the letter for a second time, when he was called to the telephone and while still engaged in conversation over the wire, a business friend dropped in requesting Carl to accompany him up town, without delay, to attend to some important business matters.

As they left the office, Carl informed Grace that

he did not believe he would be back until late in the afternoon.

Later on, Grace, when placing some papers on his desk noticed Sana's letter. Carl in his hurry had forgotten to put it in his pocket as was his custom with personal mail.

Without hesitation Grace picked up the letter and returning to her desk, read:

My darling boy:

You cannot imagine how thrilled I was to get your sweet note, saying that you are safe and happy and to know that you still love me. I am, and I always shall be yours. I am so hungry for you, my love.

The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, when you are once more with me.

Your message and the beautiful ring have removed all doubts from my heart. Thank you, my own.

You must have been in an extremely loving mood when you wrote that letter, and looking at its date I found that you wrote at a time when I could not keep you out of my mind. I was longing, longing for you, beloved. It must have been mental telepathy. At any rate that very evening I removed an old ring of mine, something told me to do it, and sure enough with your letter came that wonderful ring to take the place of the one I had discarded. To think, dear, that you will be my very very own. I wish you were here now so that I could better express my feelings for you. But alas being so far apart I can but press your picture to my heart and lips. I am living in my dream of the future which

like all great happenings, and like your sparkling solitaire, casts its brilliant beams ahead.

You know I love you dearly and I hope the day of supreme joy will soon come, when I shall register a vow before God, you and myself, to devote my life and love to you. I will be yours, yours—entirely yours and you will be mine, all mine! Won't it be wonderful, too wonderful to believe?

As you read these lines I am longing, longing for your embraces and caresses.

When thinking of you and the short sweet hours we had together, the mirror reflects my eyes like two bright stars of the desert night and I shall keep them shining to lead you back across the desert to your Sana.

Many thanks again, Carl, for the lovely surprises of today.

Having now your splendid photograph to make clearer my mental picture of you, I am reading your character and writing down my observations and comparing them with what astrology has to say.

This is my Carl—You are a keen observer, quick in thought, practical, energetic, patient, good natured, self controlled and determined. You are a planner and a diplomat. The finely chiseled features of your head and hands, as well as your silky hair and fine skin show natural refinement, love of beauty, harmony and quality. This is also proven by your voice. Your forehead, nose and eyes, prove your intellectual power.

Zodiac says: (Born between August 22nd and September 23rd). You have a fine and discriminating mind, great endurance and aptitude in acquisition of knowledge. You are capable of attainments in whatever line you undertake; but if you follow literary pursuits or astronomy you will obtain decided distinction. Whatever you do is done in an orderly,

systematic manner. You are fond of variety. You possess great rallying powers and it would be hard to keep you down. You are emotional, generous, large hearted, fond of music and the arts. You are instinctively descriminating, having likes and dislikes, but do not care to be restrained or opposed in your inclinations. You like things tasty, rich and elegant but are still a strict observer of the rules of health and nature.

While the stars say you are fond of art and tasty things, they do not say you are fond of the feminine sex. I suppose that those old astrologers who always looked at that imaginary belt in the heavens containing the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, to forecast human destiny, did not care anything about us women. So, this is my Carl!

Well, good-bye then for a while, with much love,

Your little girl of the desert,

Sana.

Grace, having finished reading the letter, realized that Sana was much cleverer than herself in expressing her feelings, and able to say far more than she would have ever attempted to put down on paper.

Comparing herself with Sana, Grace appeared to herself as a hypocritical puritan. She hated herself now for having let Carl slip away from her. Yet, she no longer bore him any grudge. She realized that he had treated her more kindly than she deserved.

It did not occur to her that the greater the intelligence and culture of a person, the greater the

expression and the appreciation of love. The less intelligent cannot understand it. The lower the plane, the less refined, the fewer and feebler are the inner feelings. The imagination of women plays a great role and it is just this that the dull unsophisticated human being is unable to comprehend.

Even the mating of the intelligent with the dull does not help the latter; it is beyond their power to learn. That they miss joys of life, they cannot see, or know why.

Society would do well to teach the public the true meaning of love and the part it plays in the progress of civilization. Unadvised, most people plunge blindly and madly along, not realizing the truth and heading straight for destruction. Much of this could be avoided were we of today but properly versed in the real meaning of life. Of course, such teaching would deprive many so-called vice crusaders and other self appointed fanatical apostles of an easy way to make a living, but the world would be wiser and happier.

Carl was more than anxious now to have his plans and specifications finished. Several weeks of hard work went by quickly, then came the message that made Carl forget all about engineering problems and sent him hurrying across the ocean to Sana's side.

Upon going to his office one morning he found a cablegram awaiting him, telling him that von Sarnoff and de Rochelle were causing Sana a great deal of annoyance and that she wished he could come to aid her in her distress.

Grace, too, had read the cablegram from Sana. Although she had long realized that the man was slipping through her fingers, she was determined now to go to whatever extreme might be necessary to obtain her end.

Once more the temptation of using the machinery of the law, by means of the Mann Act, occurred to her. Should she take advantage of it? The more she studied the situation, the more promising did the invoking of this law appear to her. Surely, she mused, she was in a position to make things disagreeable for Carl. Her word, she knew, would carry more weight with the minions of the law than his. His denials would be useless once she had stated her case and started the wheels aturning.

Carl had certainly set the trap for himself when he had refused to allow her to repay the money he had advanced for her passage from Africa.

Grace could not refrain from laughing aloud as she thought of this. At any rate, she figured, there was enough against him to prevent his leaving the country, at least for the time being.

And in the meantime what of Sana? If Carl could not get to her side to protect her from de Rochelle and von Sarnoff, they would, no doubt, take care of her. With Sana out of the way, Grace saw better chances for her own cause.

At her home that night Grace gave much thought and consideration to the matter. Several schemes came to mind, but at last she came to the conclusion that it would best serve her purpose to consult a lawyer.

She knew of no lawyer to whom she could entrust her case, so at the office the following day, she called up several of her girl friends, asking them whether they knew any such lawyer. After a few calls she was referred to one, as being just the sort of counsel she should seek. Upon getting his office on the 'phone she was asked to drop in during her lunch hour to talk things over.

Grace told her side of the story, being careful not to say anything with regard to the scheming she had done to ensnare Carl in the meshes of her net. Being pressed for time, on account of a case in court that afternoon, the attorney asked that she return that evening.

At the end of her office day, Grace again visited the lawyer. After relating her story once more in detail, Grace was assured that she had a good case.

"I would advise that you sue him for at least twenty five thousand dollars," the lawyer suggested, craftily adding, "You can easily get several thousand dollars anyway."

"Is that all?" questioned the girl, now quite mercenary, at the thought of getting easy money.

"Yes—that is unless you happen to have something in writing to hold against him."

"I have nothing."

"Too bad. If you did it would be worth a hundred thousand to you."

"A hundred thousand!"

"Yes, easily—but never mind, I can make it worth your while, as it is."

"Are you sure we have a good case against him?"

"Positively—when he paid your fare to this country he committed a criminal offense, if we want to look at it that way—and when it comes to a show-down that is the way we look at it. He has a year of imprisonment staring him in the face. I believe it will be well worth his while to pay you to keep quiet."

"Yes"—replied Grace, thinking of Carl's eagerness to get to Sana, "I think he would."

"Well then, do you want me to take your case?"

"Of course"—responded Grace. "Why do you ask?"

"You know, without doubt, that the profession cannot handle cases of this sort without a retainer being paid in advance."

"Oh, I see—what retainer would you like?"

"One thousand dollars. As soon as you pay it, I shall proceed against Mr. Lohman. There will be no notoriety attached; simply a case of making him come across on the quiet."

"But I haven't a thousand dollars," Grace objected faintly.

"No? Then I'm sorry that I cannot be of assistance to you."

Grace had had visions of fur coats and luxurious gowns, purchased with the gold she and her attorney would squeeze from Carl. Blackmail, you may call it if you wish—but the nastiness of the name means nothing in the life of a "gold digger." Now those fanciful dreams were fading from sight, just because she did not happen to have a paltry thousand dollars with which to satisfy the greed of the lawyer. She called it greed, as she sat there, trying to find a way out of the quandary, giving no thought to the fact that even "gold diggers" are often "played" for all they are worth.

The attorney, too, saw some easy money slipping through his fingers, so turning to Grace he said, in

rather a patronizing tone, "Well—I could consider five hundred."

But that sum was just as unavailable as the first and Grace hastened to tell him so, suggesting that he take the case on a fifty-fifty basis.

"Nothing doing," came the quick response. Although he didn't tell her, the lawyer wasn't so positive that they would get anything out of Carl, as he had appeared to be in his conversation. Why then, should he waste his time on a far fetched gamble?

This outcome of her plans took Grace rather by surprise. She had hoped to hold Carl by hook or by crook, and failing to hold him, the next best thing seemed the getting of some of his money. Now it looked as if she would have neither the man nor the gold. So far she had not struck "pay dirt" in her gold digging.

But like all fortune hunters, one failure did not mean utter disaster and rout to Grace's plans. There must be some way, she told herself, on her way home. Yes, there must be a way and she would sooner or later find it. Then she would show Carl she was not to be trifled with! Suppose there was notoriety and scandal connected with it. What cared she? Like so many other women she would,

no doubt, gain by it. And that alone was her object.

Luckily, Carl was entirely unaware of Grace and her scheming. He had troubles enough of his own, without being further burdened by any such menace as blackmail.

He spent the day going from one steamship office to another in an effort to book passage for an immediate sailing to Africa. But his hunt was fruitless. There were no vessels leaving for Africa within a week—neither passenger nor freight.

The best he could do was arrange to go by boat to Cadiz in Spain, trusting to his luck to be able to secure quick passage from there on some coastwise steamer, touching at different African ports.

Returning to his office he attended to a few of the most important matters that required his personal attention and prepared to leave. His baggage was already on its way to the steamer, which sailed the following morning. Before saying "goodbye" however, he gave specific instructions as to the completion of the competitive irrigation plans, and their delivery to the New York office of the Sahara Development Organization.

As Carl shook hands with Grace, she made a brave attempt at smiling, saying, "Don't forget to

send us a wireless, so that I can meet you at the dock when you return."

After Carl had gone, and she was alone in the outer office, Grace sank heavily into her chair, and pointing her finger at the door through which he had just passed, she muttered, through clinched teeth, "I'll get you yet. Yes, I'll be at the dock when you return, all right. And what will happen then will be some surprise to you and your desert vamp."

When one is in a hurry, delay sets in. Such were Carl's thoughts when the hour of sailing had long passed, and still the steamer remained in her berth. But all delays come to an end some time, and at noon the vessel was warped from the dock, and soon Carl was waving a farewell to New York's sky-scrapers.

As the boat steamed out to sea, Carl thought of the rum runners he had encountered on his last trip. He wondered whether the boats he saw on the horizon were of that calling. But these were but passing fancies. His thoughts were in Africa, beside a little lake and of a girl, who even now might be in grave danger.

The passage to Spain was a slow one it is true, but to Carl it seemed as if they would never get there. The hours of sea travel became days in his

fancy and the days ages. Every low-lying cloud bank, he prayed meant land, and when it proved otherwise, he cursed the fact that he did not have a real "Meteor," like the one of his dream, at his disposal.

At last Cadiz hove in sight. Assured by the Captain of the steamer he had come over on, that he could get passage on a freighter or cattleboat engaged in trade along the African coast, he hurried from the ship and immediately sought the offices of the steamship people named by the Captain.

Luck smiled kindly on him. There was a vessel leaving that day, destined to Spanish Africa. It was a tramp freighter, but it seemed a floating palace to Carl.

On board, Carl made plans on how to reach Timbuktoo in the quickest possible way. The steamer would take him to Senegal. From there he could take the railroad that runs along the Senegal River, for some eight hundred miles, into the African interior. So far so good. At the terminus of the railway, however, he faced a journey of some three or four hundred miles on horseback. That was the part he dreaded. As good a horseman as he was, he realized the strain such a journey would place upon man and beast, especially so if they were in a hurry. But the journey itself did not worry him

as much as the procuring of sufficient relays of horses to carry on.

Slow as the trip across the Atlantic had seemed, the passage of the freighter along the African Coast was still slower and more tedious.

Languidly the vessel crept from port to port. Being a tramp her holds held a general cargo consigned to hundreds of different points in the interior of the continent, which meant a stop at a half dozen different coast towns. The mere calling at these varied ports would not have displeased Carl as much as did the fact that the Captain of the boat saw fit to lay-up at each of the ports for a day or two. To plead with him for a more hurried journey was useless. He had made the trip a half hundred times, he told Carl, and it was always fast enough to suit him. And when an African coaster says that, he means it.

Carl was desperate, when, one rainy morning, some four weeks after leaving New York, he finally left the steamer at the port of Saint Louis, lying at the mouth of the Senegal River.

Inquiring at the railroad station as to the first train for Segu Sikoro, the last stop, on the road he was told that it would be some hours before the train left.

Cursing the indifference to time one encounters al.

over Africa, Carl turned to a little telegraph office, and from there dispatched a message to Sana, saying he was on his way to Timbuktoo, and hoped to see her within a week.

At last the train started its weary journey up the Senegal River. Carl had never traveled on an African railway, but, from what he had heard of the experiences of friends, it was something not to be considered in the light of a pleasure trip. Just how many stops it would make from time to time, for water and wood it used for fuel, he dared not picture in advance. Suffice to say, they would be too many to suit anyone in as great a hurry as he was.

From the outset the trip promised to be an unpleasant one. The rain and the heat, together with the swarming flies, foretold as much.

Carl tried to concentrate on his books, but after a few hours dreary ride, punctured by several jerking stops, and accompanied by shrieking wheels, he gave it up. He would just have to sit there and wait for his journey's end.

So he sat looking out through the rain at the dismal waters of the Senegal, until the train came to a halt at a little way station, the name of which Carl could not ascertain.

Here he was joined, in way of company, by a tall

rugged fellow, wearing tweeds that looked totally out of place in that part of the country.

As Carl looked up, the newcomer nodded pleasantly, remarking as he did so, "Beastly weather, this."

Carl, glad to get in conversation, replied to this greeting with a pleasant, "Fine for ducks."

The other, settling his bulky figure into the seat opposite Carl, proceeded to fill and light his pipe, saying—"Not supposed to, you know, but I've never been stopped yet—Smoke?" offering his tobacco pouch.

"Yes thanks, I will," and Carl, too, was soon wreathed in a cloud of pipe smoke.

They sat silently for a time, each studying the other, when Carl, anxious to renew the conversation, said "From your remarks, I take it you have traveled this road before."

"Many a time. Guess I know every inch of it and each different shriek in the wheels. By the way, name is Rogers—trader and so on."

"Mine's Lohman, engineer from New York."

"Glad to know you, Lohman," from the other, who, it was apparent, did not believe much in the formalities. Of this Carl was glad. Here was a man he could talk to without having to watch his step every inch of the way.

The other continued, "You won't mind my rudeness, I hope—but would you mind my asking what you are doing here?"

"Not at all," replied Carl; "and I'll answer you too. I'm trying to get to Timbuktoo in a hurry. And I'm sorry to say that 'hurry' seems to be the last thing thought of here."

"You have a long way to go, friend." Rogers paused for a moment, then continued with "How are you going on from Segu Sikoro?"

"I intended to go by horse if possible, but for the last few hours I have been worrying as to how I can get the horses."

"Well you would have good cause for worry if you hadn't met me. But having met me, you need not worry."

To Carl this sounded like bragging, but he felt, from within, that the man was sincere.

Without waiting for Carl to say anything, Rogers added "My place is but a few miles from the station, and a servant will be waiting for me with a buckboard. If you will accept my offer, I can fit you up."

"I shall be greatly indebted to you."

"Not at all, friend. My motto is 'Help others —you may need help some day.' I'm not asking questions as to what you are in a hurry about and

I don't want you to tell me, either. All I know is you are in a hurry and that's enough for Rogers."

Carl was no fool, and realizing the offer was made in good faith readily accepted it.

In due time they reached the railhead, and as predicted by Rogers, his servant was there, waiting to take him home. He hustled Carl into the wagon and away they went at a lively pace.

Rogers, turned to Carl, laughing and remarked "Some speed in Africa, according to where you look for it."

After a half hour's drive across the grassy plains they swung through a grove of trees, arriving shortly at the great palatial house Rogers called home.

Inside, Rogers called for whisky and soda, after which he led Carl to the bath where he could rid himself of the dust of the journey. It was then late in the afternoon, and although Carl was anxious to be on his way, he could not refuse the invitation to remain overnight.

Dawn, the following morning, found Carl up and dressed, after a night of refreshing sleep and rest. Rogers was up before him, however, and had seen to it that breakfast was on the table when his guest came downstairs.

While eating, Rogers outlined his plan to Carl. A native servant, who knew the country as only a

native can, would accompany Carl the entire distance. They would take two of Rogers' best saddle horses and ride to a distant ranch. There they would be given fresh horses for the next stage of the trip. Rogers explained that they would have to go a little out of their way, but they would make better time by having fresh horses for about every hundred miles.

Breakfast over, Rogers led Carl out of doors, where the guide and the horses were already awaiting him.

Thanking Rogers for his assistance and assuring him of his gratitude, Carl mounted, and following the guide rode speedily away. As he did so, he heard Rogers call after him "Don't forget to let me know if you find the girl safe."

"How the devil did he guess it?" Carl mused. "There certainly are strange folk in this world."

Hour after hour they rode silently. The horses seemed to realize the urgent need of speed and every tendon was strained as they galloped along, placing the miles rapidly behind them. The sun rose high over head and sank in the distant west and still the two men rode, urging their mounts on and on. Twilight, the short misty African twilight, came and was swallowed by night, and yet there was no halting in the ride.

The moon of midnight saw the weary men drop from their more weary horses at the first stopping place, a little ranch run by a friend of Rogers. The baying hounds had awakened the owner, who came out to see what caused the disturbance. Recognizing Rogers' man, he took them into the house, and being told that Rogers desired that they be given fresh horses the following morning, he assured them that Rogers' wish was his pleasure, and made haste to make the travelers comfortable for the night.

The following day was much the same as the one previous. All day they rode and far into the night. They came at last to a little lake, which Carl thought he recognized as Faguibin, but to his chagrin the guide informed him that Faguibin was still a long distance away.

They stayed overnight at a lonely ranch, and set out, once more, the following morning, before the sun had risen above the horizon, on the last stage of their ride. Again good fortune favored them and without mishap their horses fairly flew over the remaining miles.

Weary to the point of exhaustion, Carl fairly staggered, late that night, into Sana's home.

But Sana was not there to greet him. Her mother informed him, between her tears, that Sana had dis-

appeared the day before while out riding. Where she was she did not know. All she knew was that Sana was not to be found in the village, and that she believed Sana had been spirited away by someone in the employ of de Rochelle.

She directed Carl to the hotel where von Sarnoff was staying, saying that he was getting up a searching party and that no doubt, he would assist Carl in anything he would do to find the lost one.

"Von Sarnoff?" cried Carl, "I thought he, too, was annoying Sana?"

"He was in the beginning, but when he learned the truth from Sana, he ceased bothering her, and since then has been only trying to protect her from de Rochelle."

With the words—"All right, I'll see him," Carl rushed from the house and hurried to the hotel.

Making himself known to von Sarnoff, Carl sought his aid. Gladly was the request granted. The searching party would start out early the following morning, Carl was informed, and as von Sarnoff expressed it, they would find Sana even if they had to sift the desert sands.

No time was lost the next day in getting away on the search. As they proceeded, von Sarnoff told Carl that he had learned that the local telegraph

operator had been bribed by de Rochelle and had handed Carl's message to Sana over to him.

The village had been searched thoroughly for Sana, and the leader of the searching party directed the party to the jungle that lies close to the town, believing that it was there that de Rochelle would take his captive. Sana was too well known and too well liked in Timbuktoo for de Rochelle to risk keeping her, against her wish, anywhere in the city.

All that day the little group of searchers beat the bush, but in vain; Sana was not to be found; nor were they even sure that the hoof prints they saw in the soft soil were those of the fugitives.

Too late to continue, they camped for the night in the deep jungle, lying huddled on the ground, trying as best they could, to keep warm. They dared not build a fire for fear it might warn de Rochelle, if he were near, that he was being followed.

Long before dawn Carl roused the party and again the search was on. No light was thrown on the trail until about noon one of the hunters found a hat. Von Sarnoff, rushing to the spot cried—"Lohman—it is Sana's hat—we are on the right road after all."

But as the day went by, their hope of finding Sana grew less and less. They were getting into the

thickest of the jungle, which they were experiencing great difficulty in penetrating.

Wearily they pushed their way through thorn and underbrush, becoming more and more discouraged as the hours flew by.

Suddenly, to their startled ears, came the panic stricken shrieks of a woman and the wild snorting of a horse.

There was no holding them now. No brush grew thick enough to keep them from hurrying to the spot from which the cries had seemed to come.

They had not gone far, when, with a great crashing of branches, a madly galloping horse plunged past them.

"Good God!" Carl gasped as he recognized Sana's white Arab. As the horse careened by, the watchers saw hanging from his torn and bleeding neck, a black panther.

Again the screams resounded through the jungle depths.

Throwing all caution to the winds Carl plunged ahead. Entangling vines, scratching thorns and bruising branches strove to hinder him. But he was unmindful of all these. Nothing mattered! He must get to Sana, it was she who had torn the silence with her cries.

Calling to von Sarnoff, "Take care of the beast!" Carl sprang to Sana's side and freed her from her bonds.

Von Sarnoff hurried after him, but Carl was first to reach a little clearing in the jungle. A wild cry escaped his lips as he beheld the strange sight before him.

Sana was tied hand and foot to a tree. At her feet lay a heap of twigs. Had de Rochelle dared dream of torture? The question came to Carl, as with clenched fists, he turned to look for de Rochelle. He must answer for that outrage.

But de Rochelle was beyond answering for the misdeeds of his life. At the opposite edge of the clearing lay what was once a man. Tearing savagely at the body, stood the mate of the panther that had attacked the horse. Sensing danger, the beast raised its head to glare at Carl, its tail swishing angrily.

Calling to von Sarnoff "Take care of that beast!" Carl sprang to Sana's side and freed her from her bonds. She had fainted on seeing him at the edge of the clearing, and he picked her up tenderly, whispering, softly, "All is well, beloved."

Meanwhile von Sarnoff with a well directed shot had laid the panther low.

Holding his sweetheart in his arms, Carl saw the dismal jungle brightened with the rays of the setting sun, as Sana recovered consciousness and with a cry of joy embraced him, realizing that she was safe at last.

The world may be but a Fata Morgana and life an illusion to those who keep not the faith, but to those who tend the fires of truth, the rays of the setting sun shall be messengers of Peace.

THE END

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